

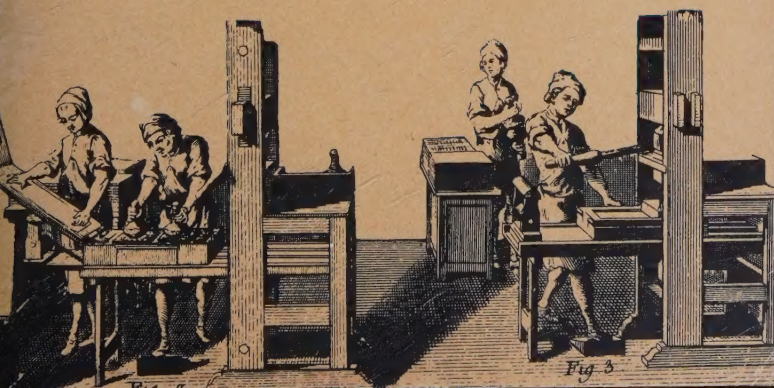
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Tamburlaine (1336?-1405). From a miniature
in the Bodleian Library. (*Bettmann Archive*)



Tamburlaine: The Great Emir

H. Hookham

About noon on Christmas day, 1396, Sir James de Helly rode posthaste into Paris to Charles VI, with the news of the annihilation of the Christian forces in the battle of Nicopolis against the Turks. All but a handful of an army of European knights had perished in this last crusade. The Ottoman Sultan Bayazid invested Constantinople and awaited only the moment to add this ancient capital to his empire. The Byzantine Emperor Manuel, heir to the Caesars, wandered through the impoverished courts of Europe pleading his cause.

Constantinople was for the time being saved not by the chivalry of Christendom but by the nomad hordes of Tartary, led by Timur the Lame. "An old, white-haired cripple from the Far East, an intellectual specialist in chess, theology, and conquest, and perhaps the greatest artist in destruction known in the savage annals of mankind," swept through Asia Minor to the plain of Angora and there inflicted total defeat on the armies of Bayazid. The Sultan himself was captured, together with his harem and slaves, his capital city, and immense treasure. Constantinople was reprieved for another half century.

The princes of Europe received the news of Angora with mingled relief and apprehension. Those in the West—perhaps feeling themselves less threatened—exchanged embassies and messages of good will. Henry IV of England, a usurper anxious to secure recognition abroad, sent a congratulatory letter. Much as the victory impressed medieval Europe, giving rise to the legend that appeared later in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*• and elsewhere, the battle was characteristic of Timur's campaigns rather than exceptional. "The whole area of the inhabited world is not worth having two monarchs," Sharaf addin 'Ali•• credits Timur with saying. Having received also the submission of the Sultan of Egypt—who sent as part of his tribute nine ostriches and a giraffe, which must have walked the three thousand miles from Cairo to Samarkand—Timur returned to his capital in 1404 to celebrate his victories.

From the threshold of China to the Mediterranean, Timur had triumphed in three major series of campaigns: first, to establish his power over Mavarannahr ("Beyond the River," i.e., Transoxiana); secondly, to reduce the danger of attacks from the Golden Horde; thirdly, to subdue and plunder the rich provinces of Persia, Transcaucasia, and Asia Minor to the west, and India to the south. He was embarked on a fourth grandiose campaign against China when he was seized with a fever. He died at Otrar (1405), some three hundred miles from Samarkand, at the age of seventy.

In the second half of the fourteenth century the rich oases of Central Asia known as Mavarannahr were ruled by two Jagatai descendants of the Genghis Khan dynasty. Timur, a local herdsman, son of a chief who had seen better days, was born at Kesh in the mountains south of Samarkand, near the passes leading to Afghanistan and India. After an

• *Tamburlaine*, *Tamerlane*, etc.: *Timur i Leng* (Persian), *Timur the Lame*, a derogatory title used at first by his enemies. In an early campaign Timur was wounded in his right arm and right leg.

•• Accompanied Timur on later campaigns.

adventurous youth, during which he lived by cunning and the sword, Timur, profiting from the conflicts between the Jagatais, seized power and became master of Bokhara, Samarkand, Balkh, and the surrounding territory. He overthrew in 1370 the companion at arms of his youth, Husein; and at a *kurultai*, or general council of princes, tribal elders, and imams of the church, held at Balkh, "mother of cities," Timur was proclaimed sole ruler of Mavarannahr. He was then thirty-four.

Timur embarked on the creation of a strong state between the Oxus (Amur-Darya)—one of the streams which, it used to be said, flow down from Paradise•—and the Jaxartes (Sye-Darya). The population of the agricultural regions and the artisans of the towns energetically applauded the suppression of feudal conflicts and disorders. Although himself a nomad by origin and habit, Timur appreciated the value of settled agriculture, crafts, and commerce. Arable farming and land settlement were encouraged. Taxation concessions permitted waste land to be brought into cultivation without assessment for the first two years. Extensive irrigation works were carried out, not only in his native Mavarannahr, but later in Khorassan, the Mughan steppe, and the Kabul basin. To repopulate the country and to glorify his cities—especially Samarkand, which he selected for his capital—Timur brought skilled work-people of every kind from the conquered provinces abroad. Moreover, vagrants and orphans were rounded up to be settled in Mavarannahr. No one was allowed to leave without a permit. Administration was strengthened by the introduction of additional duties for the governors, named *tumans*, the chiefs of ten thousand, who were also made responsible for different regions and towns; they were answerable directly to Timur. Particular attention was paid to communications. Roads were kept open in winter, guard stations and caravanserais erected at intervals along them.

• However, Juvaini, biographer of Genghis Khan, mentions tigers being caught on the banks of the Oxus; so do travelers as late as the nineteenth century.

Desert regions—"the graveyard of caravans," which in later centuries became impassable—were crossed and re-crossed by merchants and by couriers and agents of Timur. •

Above all, Timur created a strong army of Tartar nomads. He tried not only to reconcile, but to profit from, the conflicting needs on the one hand of the nomads who formed the core of his troops, with strong predatory inclinations, and on the other of the settled populations of the oases and trade routes. He embarked on the conquest and plunder of neighboring territory and led his hosts into fertile pastures beyond Mavarannahr, for example, to his favorite winter quarters in the Kara Bagh of Eastern Georgia. Clavijo, ambassador of Henry III of Castile, summed up his impressions of Timur's state: "Good order is maintained with utmost strictness and none dare fight with another or oppress his neighbor by force; indeed, as to fighting, that Timur makes them do enough, but abroad."

The most serious threat to Mavarannahr was the domination of the Golden Horde over the entire length of the northern and relatively exposed regions of the state. The remains of the dominions of Genghis Khan, which had fallen to his eldest son Juchi and his grandson Batu, were still ruled by members of that dynasty. Batu had fixed his headquarters on the Volga and there set up his golden tent from which the Horde (from *Orda*, a camp) acquired its name; there the capital city of Sarai ("palace") was built. The Horde was nomadic, living off the steppes of Russia and Siberia, and drawing tribute from the rich agricultural regions of the Crimea, Caucasus, and lower Volga. At Sarai they held court, received the submission of Russian princes, and bargained with the agents of the rival Genoese and Venetian merchants. The Horde was in decline in the fourteenth century, however, and one section, the left flank,

• "He placed through his realms his informers and in other kingdoms had appointed his spies . . . either Emirs, and learned fakirs, or traders, craftsmen, soothsayers, wandering hermits, strolling vagabonds, aged procuresses. . . ." (Ibn Arabshah).



On receiving the bloody heads of two of his chief officers, Tamburlaine (at bottom, left, horsed and mailed) in 1386 orders a general massacre of the inhabitants of Isfahan. From a manuscript of the *Timur-Nama*.

known as the White Horde, separated off with its own khans. •

By the 1370's, a khan named Urus had arisen in the more vigorous White Horde, with the serious ambition of reuniting the whole Horde under his rule. Timur studied the affairs of the Horde and the growing danger to Mavarrannahr, and sought an opportunity to intervene. The occasion came in 1376 when Toktamish, one of the White Horde princes, fled from the court of Urus Khan after a quarrel. Timur welcomed the possibility of an ally against Urus, made Toktamish his protégé, and twice sent him with forces—unsuccessfully—against the White Horde. A year later, however, Urus Khan died, and, after ousting all rivals, Toktamish succeeded to the throne.

The protégé did not fulfil Timur's hopes. On the contrary, Toktamish adopted the policy of Urus to unite the Horde. Taking advantage of the defeat inflicted by Dmitri, Prince of Moscow, upon Mamai of the Golden Horde—at Kulikov

• Some authorities use the terms Western and Eastern Kipchaks (Desert men) respectively for the Golden and White Hordes. Khan: monarch.

in 1380—Toktamish inflicted another defeat on Mamai in the same year. He assumed power in the Golden Horde, and, uniting the two sections, took up quarters at Sarai. Two years later, he sacked Moscow and put the citizens to the sword. Encouraged by these victories, Toktamish turned south and undertook several campaigns into the fertile regions of the Caucasus, Azerbaijan, and Khorassan, claiming territories that had by that time submitted to Timur. He did not strike directly at Mavarannahr until the absence of Timur's armies in Persia gave him some security. Then he penetrated to the outskirts of Bokhara, on the route for Samarkand.

Timur, near the Caspian, heard the news from a courier, who had covered the nine hundred miles from Samarkand in seven days. The Emir returned so swiftly that he appeared on the scene before Toktamish could reach the capital. The Golden Horde withdrew to the steppe beyond the Jaxartes.

The decisive struggle with the Horde still lay ahead. Timur suppressed the rebellion stirred up by Toktamish in the western province of Kwariam, a region of ancient culture and the probable home of the Zoroastrian faith. Ugenj, the main city, was leveled to the ground and barley was sown on the site where formerly Samarkand's trade rival had stood. The population was removed to Samarkand. To the east Timur drove the predatory Jats* from their mountain stronghold of Almalyk, and scattered them so thoroughly that for years they could not trouble his borders again. With his flanks cleared, Timur set out in February 1391, to seek Toktamish in his own country. The Horde might have been anywhere, from the Black Sea to the Irtish, from the Baltic regions to the borders of the Gobi desert. But it was a principle with Timur not to fight a defensive war, and not to involve Mavarannahr in the destruction of a campaign.

Beyond the Jaxartes, most of the women of the royal court were sent home. A host of two hundred thousand

*Also Tartar or Mongol, nomads. "Tartar" and "Mongol" have come to be used synonymously.

strong swept north across the desert. They moved and camped in set formation. Thus, in darkness there was no confusion; in case of attack, formations were prepared; and the widespread array allowed the horses to take what advantage they could of any grazing. All were mounted and armed with a cuirass of linked mail, helmet, shield, and two bows—one for long distance, and one for rapid shooting. Each man had thirty arrows, a scimitar or two-edged sword, and any other small side arms he wished. Carts with high wheels carried tents—each of which slept ten men—together with equipment for each group: two spades, a saw, a pickaxe, a coil of heavy cord, a hundred needles, a cooking pan, and an ox-hide. On entering the desert, each man was rationed to some sixteen pounds of flour a month; other food was of the lightest, like barley, and dried fruit. Hunters went out in advance for meat. There was a spare mount for every two men. Both Clavijo and Arabshah report that women took part in the fighting. •

After the encampment in the evening, in the places already picked out by scouts, the lord of each division rode to Timur's central standard for the review, preceded by a band of pipes, horns, flutes, cymbals, and drums, accompanied by minstrels singing war songs. The lords wore fur-tipped helmets, crimson and sable cloaks. Timur himself, even in the desert, wore the finest silks and brocades. He had a double set of tents and pavilions, one of which was sent in advance to the next camp. He was accompanied by a number of learned men and secretaries. He understood Persian and Turkish, although literate in neither. He loved to listen to reading, especially of histories, but valued knowledge of all kinds. He enjoyed theological dispute,

• "There were also with his army many women who mingled in the mêlée of battle . . . and overcame mighty heroes in combat with the thrust of the spear, the blow of the sword and the shooting of arrows; when one of them was heavy with child, and birthpangs seized her while they were on the march, she turned from the way and, descending from her beast, gave birth to the child; wrapping it in bandages, she soon mounted the beast and taking the child with her, followed her company. There were with his army men born on the march grown to full age, who married and begot children and yet never had a fixed home" (Arabshah). Arabshah was captured in his youth by Timur and taken to Samarkand.



Central Asia, showing the range of Tamburlaine's operations, from Angora to Delhi. (Map by S. H. Perrin.)

but religion for him was a means of securing a political end rather than a faith. He retained an exceptional memory to the end of his days—"he had hidden in the treasures of his imagination the forms of all kingdoms." And he was addicted to chess, which he played in a more complicated form than the normal.

Timur pushed rapidly across the desert, his scouts circling far in advance for news. He crossed the Sari Su river into the Hungry steppe. Still he pressed north into unfamiliar and empty land. "It is called the Land of Shadows," said Ibn Battuta, the Moroccan traveler, who passed that way half a century earlier. "No one sees the people who live in this place. Here the days are long in summer, and the nights are long in winter." The imams at a solemn council decided that the daily routine of prayer could be changed.

A division of twenty thousand was detached to seek out the Horde. Some came to the river Tobol, which joins the Irtysh and flows into the Arctic. Others found fires, smoldering, on the west bank of the river. Turning west, Timur crossed the Urals, and came upon the Horde in June after

eighteen weeks and some eighteen hundred miles of forced marches. The battle, a bitter combat, was fought at Kandurcha near Samara (Kuibyshev), and ended with the defeat of the Horde, the capture of their camp, and the flight of Toktamish across the Volga. Moving now slowly south, collecting more loot—herds and furs and silver and bales of cloth—Timur declared a week's festival, which was celebrated with customary abandon in the warm lower reaches of the Volga.

The Horde had been defeated, but their power not completely broken. A few years later Toktamish was again raiding the Caucasian territories of Timur, and in 1395 Timur undertook a decisive campaign. Reaching the river Terek (which rises from Mount Elbrus and flows into the Caspian), the hosts of Timur and Toktamish faced each other across the river, with Toktamish holding the only ford. Timur moved his forces upstream along the south bank. Toktamish kept pace along the north. "This business went on and was repeated during three days, neither army outstripping the other, but on the third night as soon as his camp was formed Timur issued orders that all the women who had marched with his soldiers should don helmets with men's war gear to play the part of soldiers, while the men should mount and forthwith ride back with him to the ford, each horseman taking a second mount by the bridle . . . on coming to the ford the army halted that night, and the following day crossed the river, marching back along the opposite bank when they fell upon the camp of Toktamish and completely routed him, plundering all his possessions. Timur," continues Clavijo, "ever counted this the most notable of his victories; indeed it was a greater one than that where the Turkish Sultan Bayazid was overcome."

The road to the Volga lay open to Timur. No cities were spared on this march north. Astrakan was destroyed, the inhabitants left to perish in the cold. Sarai shared the same fate; enormous booty was taken, captives sent as slaves to Samarkand. Timur continued north and reached the then Russian frontier town of Yeletz, which he destroyed.

Moscow feared yet another Mongol attack, as Timur's standards moved along the Don. But he turned south, to sack the cities of the Crimea and Transcaucasia. So great was the devastation that economic recovery was extremely slow. The richest tributaries of the Horde had been destroyed. The power of Toktamish was broken and he fled to the northern forests, to Duke Witold of Lithuania. His successor, Iduku, never succeeded in reviving the power of the Horde, remaining neutral in the struggle against Bayazid. Timur's invasion was the final blow from which the Golden Horde never recovered.

"To achieve any amount of stability a nomad empire must be provided by its leader with the riches of civilized countries, either by conquest or by plundering expeditions" (V. V. Barthold). Extensive opportunities presented themselves to the south and to the west, with which regions Mavarannahr had ancient political, economic, and cultural ties of varying character, dating from Alexander the Great. After the fall of the Hulagu (Genghis Khan) dynasty in 1336, Persia degenerated into a collection of weak feudal states, none of which was strong enough to stand up to Timur. The Great Emir, who never neglected an opportunity for political justification of his actions, used as a pretext for his intervention the need to restore order, which had been disrupted by religious conflict and dynastic quarrels.

Preceded by diplomatic exchanges, in which Timur had invited the Malik (governor) of Herat to become his vassal, the Tartar legions moved southwest. Herat was one of the strongest towns of Khorassan (eastern Persia, Land of the Sun); besides a population of some quarter of a million, it possessed several hundred colleges, ten thousand shops, three thousand bath houses, and a fortress that was supposed to be indestructible. • The famous gates of Herat,

•At that time London and Paris probably had no more than sixty thousand inhabitants each.

together with the treasure of the Maliks—silver money, uncut precious stones, brocades, and gold thrones—were taken to Kesh, Timur's birthplace. By 1383 most of Khorassan was in Timur's hands.

Across the chain of salt deserts, another group of petty rulers, the Muzaffars, wrangled over their rich inheritance of Fars, Isfahan, and Shiraz. In 1386, Timur approached Isfahan, a city of bazaars and domes and gardens, with seventy divisions. The Muzaffars offered their submission and the payment of a great ransom, and a garrison was sent into the city pending the completion of negotiations. Fighting started and the Tartar garrison was slaughtered. Timur's vengeance was typically ruthless: every man in the army was ordered to bring out the head of a Persian. Only those quarters that had not participated in the rising, and some leaders and venerable men, were spared. From the seventy thousand or more skulls thus collected• was erected one of the high towers or pyramids for which Timur's conquests are infamous. Shiraz and the other cities submitted and paid their ransoms. A few years later, after the defeat of Toktamish at Kandurcha, Timur added Baghdad, Abode of Peace, other cities of Mesopotamia and Armenia, to his conquests. From the campaigns in Persia he carved out fiefs for his sons and grandsons.♦♦

After each great campaign, Timur returned to Samarkand. It was his aim to make it the first city in the world, and there he brought all his booty, together with craftsmen, artists, mechanics, astrologers, men of letters. On his return in 1396 he exempted the population from taxation for three years. Madrassahs (Moslem colleges) and mosques, palaces and shrines arose, faced with turquoise ceramics, gold, and alabaster. Each of his main queens had her own

♦ Those Tartars unwilling to secure their own heads bought other soldiers' surpluses.

♦♦ The misrule of Miranshah, Timur's dissolute and possibly insane son, who had received Baghdad and northern Persia, helped to produce widespread disorders which Timur subdued in his last campaign in this region.

palace and gardens. Clavijo describes all these, together with the orchards and fountains, and the great state pavilions made with crimson tapestry, lined with gold brocade or sometimes ermine skins. In the enclosure of the Great Khanum (Timur's chief wife) he noticed a golden tree tall as a man, whose fruit was rubies, emeralds, turquoises, sapphires, with little birds made of gold enamel in many colors.

A wide thoroughfare was built to accommodate the bazaar, and suburbs around the city were named after other great cities—Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, Sultania, Shiraz. When Timur returned from his triumphant campaign in India in 1399, ninety-seven trains of elephants (it is said) were brought back laden with the treasure of Asia; with them came more slaves, masons, jewelers, to help in the creation of an immense azure cathedral mosque, known today as the Bibi-Khanum.

Many of Timur's high emirs had been reluctant to tackle India, where the hazards were different from the ones they were familiar with; they feared the rivers, forests, the sultry heat—and the reports of battle-trained elephants. But Timur again took advantage of disputed succession, and of the revolts of the northern provinces against the Sultans of Delhi. He led an army of over ninety thousand through the Khyber Pass—the fourth Moslem invasion of India. He inveigled the weak Sultan of Delhi to give battle in the plain outside Delhi. The elephants—more feared than dangerous—were scattered by camels bearing loads of blazing straw. Timur sacked Delhi at leisure and moved slowly down the Ganges plundering the Hindu border cities. •

On these later expeditions into Persia and India, infan-

• It was during this campaign that a hundred thousand Indian captives in Timur's rear were slaughtered because it was thought they might revolt. When the record was being read to Timur by one of his secretaries, he objected to the number of the slaughtered, saying that a cook should be judged by the success of his dishes, not by the blood on his hands during the preparation.

try, recruited from the settled areas, accompanied the army. They were never its core, but were employed for the artillery and general servicing. Timur also used explosives for mining fortresses, catapults, and flamethrowers (flaming naphtha).

For a considerable time Timur had nurtured a grandiose plan for the invasion of China, with which a lively caravan trade was carried on along the great Silk Route. Divisions had been sent to explore Kashmir, the Gobi, and all the border regions. Agriculture had been restored in these regions, and supplies built up. A fortress had been established together with a line of advanced posts. In the armories of Samarkand weapons were being forged by captive craftsmen, and armaments amassed. In the 1360's the Mongol successors of Ghengis Khan in China had been supplanted by the Ming Dynasty. The succession was disputed towards the end of the 1390's; by that time Timur was showing open hostility, detaining the Chinese ambassadors within Mavarannahr.

Meanwhile, an alliance had grown up against Timur in the western lands of Islam between Sultan Ahmed of Baghdad, protégé of the Sultan of Cairo, and the Turkish Sultan Bayazid, who was offering sanctuary to Timur's enemies. A period of negotiations took place between Bayazid and Timur. It is possible that, with the invasion of China in view, Timur would have been content to leave Bayazid to his European conquests had he felt sure that his rear in Asia Minor and Persia would be secure. But Bayazid, after Nicopolis, felt he could take the old Tartar in his stride. The exchanges turned to insults, culminating in the threat by Bayazid to violate Timur's favorite wife.

As the fifteenth century opened, Timur was again in Persia, storming all cities as far as Sivas, the key to Asia Minor. Turning south, he defeated the Sultan of Egypt at Aleppo and Damascus, which were put to the sword and the fire. The remnants of the Egyptian armies fled further south. In the full heat of June 1401 Timur

swung back to the Tigris; Baghdad was stormed and destroyed. Timur then returned to Tabriz• to rest and restore his troops in winter pastures, and to be joined by fresh divisions from Samarkand. All Bayazid's allies had been eliminated. Moreover, Timur was in secret negotiation with other Tartar supporters of Bayazid, for their defection. Agents from Genoa brought an appeal for help from the Christian emperor at Constantinople. At last, in spring 1402, the two hosts moved across Asia Minor, to meet on the plain of Angora.

Timur's enemies said that the fabulous celebrations in Samarkand that followed, when five of the royal grandsons were wedded and all religious and normal restraints were abandoned, gave Timur a fever that nearly caused his death. However that may be, fever smote him fatally several months later on a cold winter's night in 1405, after he had set out on the long prepared invasion of China. He was buried in Samarkand in a temple surmounted by a fluted blue ceramic dome, with a slab of dark jade as a memorial.♦♦

• Tabriz was a great entrepôt of nearly a million people, where the north-south trade route between the Persian Gulf and Russia crossed the great Silk Route between China and the Mediterranean. Timur gained from Tabriz alone revenues larger than the annual income of the French king.

♦♦ In 1941 the tomb was opened by Soviet archaeologists and historians. In a wooden coffin were found remnants of clothing, some beard, one eyebrow, and a red mustache. The skeleton, that of a tall, well-built man, was found to have the bones of the right arm deformed, consistent with a withered limb. The bones of the right leg had been broken and were knit to the hip.

The Partitions of Poland

L. R. Lewitter

From 1772 onward Poland's national territory has behaved like one of those clouds in the sky that shrink, disintegrate, join with their neighbors, and vanish altogether, only to reappear in a different shape. The designation has changed with the design, but the word "Republic" has tended to recur. The elective monarchy of the Old Regime was called a Republic and so was the Poland of the interwar period, though for half the time the term concealed a dictatorship, while the Poland of Gomulka goes under the name of the Polish People's Republic. In the nineteenth century for some fifty years Russian Poland was nominally the Kingdom of Poland, and until the First World War, Austrian Poland was known by the deceptively Iberian-sounding appellation of Galicia and Lodomeria. The ready-made phrases connected with the name of Poland, to be found in the political vocabulary of modern Europe, produce an impression not so much of constant change as of precariousness and instability: "the Polish Question," "a Buffer State," "the Polish Corridor," "the Recovered Territories," and, going back in time, "the Partitions of Poland." The term "partitions," besides covering the period between

1772 and 1795, applies also to 1939 when Hitler and Stalin agreed that Poland had "ceased to exist," as indeed she had, in consequence of their military and diplomatic action.

Why have the Polish people been obliged, since 1772, to endure some form or other of foreign domination except for the brief period between 1918 and 1939? What are the forces in and around the basin of the Vistula that, time and time again, cause the center of authority to shift and the frontiers to expand or shrink? There is no simple answer to this question, but a review of the circumstances that led to and accompanied the partitions may bring out some of the constant political factors at work in that part of Europe.

As every student of the eighteenth century knows, Poland was partitioned three times. In 1772 she lost to Prussia the area lying between Pomerania and East Prussia in the west and, farther to the east, Ermeland; to Austria a large triangle based on the Carpathians, its left side running just south of Cracow, its right side well to the northeast of Lvov; to Russia the regions beyond the Dvina, the Druch, and the Dnieper; in all, more than a quarter of her territory, about 50,000 square miles with four million inhabitants out of a total population of about eleven million. In the second partition, carried out in 1793, Prussia seized Danzig and the area to the west of a line drawn from Czestochowa through Sochaczew to Dzialdowo, and Russia the region east of the line running from Druya to Pinsk and thence to the river Zbruch. In 1795 the remaining area of some 80,000 square miles was divided between Prussia, Russia, and Austria. For a century and a quarter there was to be no Poland but only a "Polish Question." The results of this unprecedented vanishing trick, carried out in three stages, were manifold. Prussia had at last achieved territorial unity; Austria had acquired an uneasy conscience and yet another nationality to keep in subjection; Russia had driven a territorial wedge into Central Europe and was now brought face to face with Prussia.

The first partition may have come as a shock, but could not have been a surprise to any thinking Pole or well-informed European. A century earlier, at the Sejm of

1661, King John Casimir had declared that, if the throne remained elective without the power of the Crown being strengthened, the republic would fall a prey to her neighbors. Muscovy would appeal to her kin speaking the same tongue—that is, to the White Russians and Ukrainians—and detach the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; the frontiers of Western Poland lay open before the Brandenburger, and it must be expected that he would want the whole of Prussia; finally, the House of Austria, covetous of Cracow, would not miss a favorable opportunity of annexing it. In the middle of the eighteenth century, a French writer on the art of government, Gaspard de Réal, pointed out that a country like Poland, which had hardly any fortresses or troops, or artillery or money or supplies, was often the plaything of its neighbors and must in the end be subjugated by them. That day might not be far distant and would come as soon as the neighboring states had agreed on the division that they would want to make. It came exactly twenty-two years later.

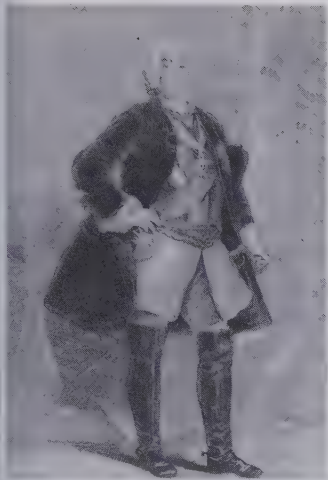
Partition was a major political fashion of the eighteenth century, a rational way for monarchs to settle their differences and adjust one another's potentials in the name of the balance of power. The absolute monarch was considered the owner of the territories over which he ruled, nationalities had no recognized rights, and the acquisition of land, no matter by whom it was inhabited, especially by peaceful means, was regarded as an unmixed blessing. Any country that happened to be weaker than its neighbors was liable to become the object of a conspiracy whose members found a guarantee of impunity in their complicity. Thus the Spanish succession was divided in 1713–14, a fate that the Austrian inheritance narrowly escaped in 1741, and the Great Northern War originated in a scheme to share out the Swedish possessions on the south shore of the Baltic. In Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, particularly, the choice seemed increasingly to lie between partitioning or being partitioned. It was in order to weaken Prussia that Russia entered the Seven Years' War. According to a plan drawn up by the Empress Elizabeth's foreign minister,

Bestuzhev, in the event of victory Austria was to be rewarded with Silesia, Poland was to receive East Prussia but in return to yield her suzerainty over Kurland to Russia and to accept a rectification of the Russo-Polish frontier in the Ukraine. The reason for Poland's finding herself in such sharp company was not the astuteness of her diplomats—for she had none to speak of—but the fact that Augustus III, as well as being the elective King of Poland, was also Elector of Saxony, and consequently had a direct interest in checking the growth of Prussia. Gradually, as dismemberment—an operation by which territorial limbs were, so to speak, severed from the trunk—came to involve too many risks, this kind of operation gave way to partition pure and simple.

The perversion of the principle of the balance of power was noted and described by Vergennes soon after the first partition of Poland: "For two centuries the great powers have concentrated their entire attention, often to the point of exhausting all their resources, on preventing any one of them from becoming preponderant. Now a new combination has replaced the system of general balance; three powers have set up one of their own. It is based on the equality of their usurpations and thus the balance of power is made to tip heavily in their favour."• This is, in fact, what Sorel calls the "*système copartageant*" with its attendant casuistry that confuses the equitability of the action with the equality of shares. It is characteristic of the disingenuous mental habits of the period that each of the monarchs concerned in the first partition of Poland should have invoked the principle of the balance of power. Frederick II informs posterity that the principal reason for the partitions was the desire to avoid the general war that was on the point of breaking out. "What is more," he continues, "the balance of power between such close neighbors (that is, Prussia and Russia) had to be maintained,"•• the same reason as that given by Maria Theresa in her act of accession to the

• See Piggott and Omond, *Documentary History of the Armed Neutralities*, 45.

•• *Mémoires*, 1763–1775, *Works*, VI, 35, 37.



Augustus III (1696–1763), Elector of Saxony, King of Poland (1734–63). After a painting by Louis de Silvestre. (Bettmann Archive.)



Catherine the Great (1729–96). Eighteenth-century engraving by James Walker after a painting by Shebanoff. (Bettmann Archive.)

partition and one whose validity, *mutatis mutandis*, was fully recognized and exploited by Catherine II.

Poland was carved up, and the various portions of her territory thrown into the scales of the balance of power, because she was weak. The cause of her weakness was her backwardness. At the time of the first partition, Poland's political system was the exact opposite of the enlightened absolutism prevailing in Prussia, Russia, and Austria—a republic in name, an elective monarchy in theory, a peculiar brand of obscurantist anarchy in practice. The King was little more than dispenser of patronage to a self-seeking and often traitorous oligarchy of magnates exercising more than semifeudal authority over their adherents from the middle and petty *szlachta* or gentry; a privileged class more numerous than in other countries, more ignorant, and factious in the extreme; a deputy was always ready to break up the Sejm by exercising the infamous free veto. There was no professional civil service or judiciary, the method of administration was self government by the *szlachta*. The army, numbering between 12,000 and 16,000 officers and men, was paid out of a special budget of just over one mil-

lion thaler. The Polish economy was primitive, and, at any rate until the reign of Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski (1764–95), stationary, if not actually contracting. Manufactures were almost completely lacking, agricultural production was in decline, though the landowners were able to charge high prices for their produce. Imports exceeded exports, the volume of internal trade was small, capital was short. In these circumstances no middle class, as distinct from the congeries of Jewish middle-men, could develop to fill the void between the *szlachta* and the peasantry, who were tied to the soil and burdened with compulsory labor for the benefit of the landlords. Shortly before the election of Stanislas Augustus, a well-informed and farsighted writer, the Abbé Coyer, summed up these deficiencies in the following program of reform: "The truly great King of Poland will be he who . . . turning his attention towards a fertile soil, fine rivers, and the Baltic and Black Seas, shall introduce shipping, manufactures, commerce, wealth, and inhabitants into this great kingdom; who shall abolish the Tribunitial power of the *liberum veto* (and enable) the nation to govern by a plurality of suffrages; who shall teach the nobles that the peasants who supply them with food, and are descended from the Sarmatians their common ancestors, are men; and who . . . shall extirpate that civil pest of servitude, which destroys emulation, industry, arts, sciences, honor, and prosperity."•

To number the geographical factor among the causes of the partitions is to confuse cause and effect. Economic debility, political disorder, a faulty social structure, as well as reduction in territory and the consequential fall in military value of the frontier, are all of a piece with a general process of decline. It is a commonplace that Poland had few natural frontiers; but Prussia's were even less favorable and yet did not prevent her from becoming one of the partitioners—one might almost say that the contrary was the case. In the east, Poland, with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, had long been losing ground to Muscovy. By 1667, as a result of the peace treaty concluded between the two countries at Andrusovo, the length of Poland's

• *History of John Sobieksi*, 1762, 490–491.

frontiers lying beyond main rivers, and therefore strategically advantageous, fell from seventy to thirty-seven per cent, the length of her frontiers lying on the near side of main rivers—a strategic liability—rose from thirty to sixty-three per cent, while only the length of her border actually running along main rivers remained unchanged.

Her three neighbors were as strong as Poland was weak. Russia was already a colossus, but had not yet reached the limits of her territorial expansion in the direction of the Black Sea. Although she had not yet begun to exploit the wealth of her natural resources with the aid of modern methods, she was already by 1770 one of Europe's biggest exporters of pig iron. Her manufactures were able to supply and equip a standing army of about 350,000. Prussia was solvent and well administered, as yet a dynasty rather than a nation, dedicated to an unceasing conquest of territory and population by means of a proverbially efficient army of some 200,000 men. Austria, with a permanent army of about 250,000 and an annual revenue of about 37 million thaler, was Poland's least aggressive neighbor. In a word, Russia was the Russia of Catherine the Great, Prussia the Prussia of Frederick the Great, Austria the Austria of Maria Theresa and Joseph II; while Poland was the Poland of Stanislas Augustus, a man of rare intelligence and good taste, and no mean politician, ideally fitted to be the benevolent ruler of some minor German principality, but unequal to the superhuman task which history, in the person of Catherine, whose lover he had been, had reserved for him.

Since the battle of Poltava in 1709, Poland had been little more than a Russian protectorate, serving, whenever convenient, as a dual gateway into Turkey and into Europe. It was Peter the Great's policy to achieve and perpetuate this state of affairs, to include the whole of Poland in his sphere of influence and to use it as a maneuvering space for his armies rather than incorporate in Russia any part of her territory. Partition he was prepared to consider only as a last resort, when faced with the prospect of having to wage war on more than one dangerous enemy. Only then did parts of Poland become expendable—sops to pacify

Prussia or Sweden or both. By and large his policy was also that of his successors. In the early part of Catherine's reign the Northern System devised by her foreign minister, Panin, a bloc designed to counterbalance the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons, provided for a Poland entirely dominated by Russia. But Catherine's personal conduct of foreign affairs was to be flexible and constantly adjusted to "circumstances, conjuncture, and conjecture." Her dislike of ready-made systems coupled with a desire to go down in history as "*une femme extraordinaire*" played straight into the hands of her Hohenzollern counterpart.

The change in the relationship between Poland and Prussia was more spectacular: in the space of a hundred and fifteen years a former vassal turned into a partitioner. It is true that already the Great Elector had been contemplating partition in co-operation with Charles Gustavus of Sweden, but, having once secured suzerainty over East Prussia, he thought it more politic to safeguard his gains by remaining on good terms with Poland and, in his political testament, advised his heir to do likewise. The ambiguous concern for the liberties of the *szlachta* shown by the Great Elector in an instruction to his envoy in Warsaw was perpetuated by Frederick I, who commanded his successor to ensure that Poland remained a republic, whose monarch reigned without governing, and to form his own party from among the deputies to the Sejm so that he might disrupt it at will. These precepts were adhered to by both Frederick William I and Frederick II until they gave way to the aim of joining together West and East Prussia at Poland's expense, finally formulated by Frederick II in 1752: "Polish Prussia had better not be conquered by force of arms but consumed in peace after the manner of an artichoke, leaf by leaf."

Austria had no designs on Poland, and, until Poniatowski's election, pursued the policy of counterbalancing the growing might of Prussia by supporting Poland's Saxon kings, to whom the Hapsburgs were bound by dynastic ties. After 1764, Maria Theresa steered a middle course in the hope of maintaining the *status quo*; but Austria's occupa-

• Küntzel and Hass, *Die politische Testamente der Hohenzollern*, II, 4

tion of Zips in 1769, though not inexcusable as a military precaution backed by a legal claim, announced her readiness to join in a partition and set an example that Catherine and Frederick were soon to follow.

Such were the respective attitudes of the three powers towards Poland in the early years of the reign of Stanislas Augustus. On the occasion of his election, Russia and Prussia declared officially that they did not seek partition, which to anyone familiar with the language of diplomacy meant that such a course had at least been considered by them. Catherine was undecided; Frederick confessed in a letter to his brother, Prince Henry, that the idea still appealed to him but that he did not feel equal to the task: "A man must have the wind of fortune in his sails to succeed in such an enterprise and I do not flatter myself that I can do it."• Events, however, came to his aid. The settlement, imposed by Catherine, of the claims of the religious dissenters in Poland had provoked a violent outburst of patriotic and religious feeling, expressed in the confederacy of Bar which inspired Frederick to indite a mock epic poem in the worst possible taste, "*La Guerre des confédérés*" ("... *le démon, la Vierge et la Sottise Sont les auteurs de ce brouillamini*"), and Voltaire to sink to the depth of Tartuffian hypocrisy in his propaganda campaign on behalf of Catherine: "*Elle prévient une guerre civile en Pologne et envoya la paix avec une armée.*"

There were two kinds of dissenters in Poland; just over 200,000 Protestants, living mostly in the northwestern part of the country, and some 600,000 Orthodox in present-day White Russia and the Ukraine. In a period when religious persecution was becoming a thing of the past, Poland, known in the sixteenth century as *paradisus haereticorum*, had long since abandoned her tradition of religious toleration. The Protestant *szlachta*, mostly Calvinist, was excluded from the Sejm and the judiciary and debarred from civil office; the community at large was prevented from building new conventicles and deprived of its old established schools and places of worship. On the highways Protestant min-

• See Easum, *Prince Henry of Prussia*, 263.

isters went in fear of life and limb, and so did Orthodox priests. The Orthodox community had been some four million stronger, but had lost to Rome the majority of its members and virtually its entire privileged class, including its bishops, through conversion to the Uniate rite. What had begun as a more or less voluntary process became systematic coercion of monasteries, flocks, and churches.

The confederacy formed in 1768 caused the Turks to intervene in Poland, and this, in turn, led to war between Russia and Turkey and conjured up the prospect of a major conflict involving Austria. This extremity was in the end avoided at the expense of Poland and in complete accordance with Frederick's scheme. "*Pour profiter des combinaisons aussi favorables,*" he writes in the third person, "*le Roi résolut de pousser l'affaire du partage.*" The basis of the transaction effected in 1772 was compensation: to Russia for the limited success of the war against Turkey, to Austria for her failure to obtain a cession of Turkish territory, to Prussia for her work as go-between and also for good measure, lest she should lose where others had gained.

Although both Frederick and Catherine regarded themselves as crowned *philosophes* and corresponded with Voltaire, they differed in their attitude towards the dissenters. For Frederick, as for his predecessors, they were merely another lever for the subversion of whatever law and order was still left in the Republic. His aim was not to "*écraser l'infâme*" by obtaining a redress of the wrongs suffered by the dissenters but, together with Catherine, to continue protecting their interests and to strengthen the Russo-Prussian alliance by the joint action provided for in a secret clause figuring in every treaty between the two countries since 1720. The abolition of the dissenters' disabilities would have loosened this bond and, incidentally, put a stop to the influx of Protestant immigrants from Poland, a welcome addition to Prussia's manpower. Catherine's motives were of another kind, not entirely rational and far from clear. Could she really have believed that fanaticism was the cause of the anarchy that she was professedly seeking to extirpate by imposing toleration on

scale which even a British official felt bound to adjudge "unreasonable," "dangerous," and "invidious?" Did she not understand that religious freedom and "*aurea libertas*" were incompatible? Was she trying to emulate Peter the Great? If so, she overlooked his consistent refusal to make the rights of the Polish dissenters an international issue. Or was she trying to live up to the flattering image of her which Voltaire was painting for the benefit of "enlightened" opinion in the West? Her actions in Poland and her pronouncements on the situation there, combined with a skillful use of patronage, were certainly contributing to the creation of the "*mirage russe*"—a Russia more "progressive" than any country under the *ancien régime* because ruled over by an autocrat who was a member of the cosmopolitan fellowship of the *philosophes* and a friend of all mankind. Whatever she did must be right, and if, once the partition was accomplished, she left the dissenters to their fate, it was so much the worse for them.

With the first partition, the balance of power in Eastern Europe, and consequently, peace, was preserved, and in Poland religious toleration was seemingly enforced. The action of the partitioning powers appeared to be in consonance with the tenets of the Enlightenment. In fact, however, their motives had not been idealistic but realistic; they had benefited from the Republic's weakness to increase their own power or to recoup their losses. Catherine gained more in prestige than in territory, but consolidated her position in Poland: Frederick joined Pomerania to East Prussia by means of Polish or West Prussia; and at the same time by setting up a custom house on the lower Vistula obtained a stranglehold on Poland's economy. Maria Theresa acquired a large triangle of territory beyond the Carpathians, drawn in such a way as to include the rich royal salt mines of Wieliczka. By contrast, Poland lost the most important section of her seaboard and direct access to the port of Danzig and large tracts of ethnically Polish territory. Since her three neighbors eventually guaranteed her constitution but not her territorial integrity, no safeguards, however slender, protected her against further par-

tition. Her chances of survival, even as a semi-independent state, were accordingly uncertain. But in favorable circumstances the situation might yet be redressed by skillful diplomacy, provided Poland increased her strength by political and economic reform. Once she had become worthy of consideration as a potential ally, she might be able to offer her support on her own terms to one of the partitioners. It was to this end that the King and his adherents were now to direct their efforts.

In the period between the first and third partition, far-reaching changes took place in Poland. Within less than fifteen years, as a result of reforms instituted by private individuals and measures adopted by the government, the lot of the peasants improved considerably, causing a steady rise in the birth rate; agricultural production increased and the export trade flourished as never before. Some three hundred undertakings, capable of satisfying a large proportion of the demand for manufactured products, were established and the volume of imports reduced; the urban population rose to 1,200,000; banking houses were founded, the balance of trade became favorable; gold and silver money was plentiful; the central and provincial organs of administration were growing in numbers and efficiency; the revenue of the treasury to which before 1772 the taxpayers never contributed more than thirteen million now rose to twenty-four and a half and eventually to forty million zlotys in a reduced territory; during the war with Russia in 1792 an army of 69,000 was put in the field; the structure of society had begun to alter and even the wretched political institutions were reformed, at any rate on paper. The conservative opposition was strong; but the uprising of 1794 proved the determination of the majority to stand by the movement of reform. Towards the end of the century, the mentality and behavior of educated Poles had more in common with the first half of the nineteenth than with that of the eighteenth century.

The intellectual revolution, which preceded political reform, was the outcome of a movement dating from the 1750's. Slowly at first, and later gaining in rapidity, it

Enlightenment with its attendant economic and social circumstances spread to Poland. Once again, after an interval of some two centuries, Poles were traveling in the West and bringing back new and controversial ideas. A contemporary poet shows a young gentleman on his return from abroad communicating to his friends the essence of the new gospel:

Voltaire does not say "Go to Mass on Sundays,"
 Helvétius said divorce was not a sin,
 Rousseau is an enemy of holy water,
 Locke said the tithe was simply a trick,
 Newton hated the forty days of Lent,
 Diderot thinks it a pity to listen to sermons,
 D'Alembert has written against confirmation . . .

Once religious skepticism had set in, the way was clear for the new learning which, little by little, ousted peripatetic philosophy. Two dates may be indicated as significant in the progress of the Enlightenment: in 1771 the Abbé Poczobut, an astronomer, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London; in 1776 torture and the death penalty for witchcraft were abolished: the Copernican system was now orthodox and magic was falling into disrepute.

The secularization of life and thought was assisted by the agency set up in 1773 for the purpose of taking over the endowments and educational duties of the newly dissolved Jesuit order. The National Education Commission, as finally organized ten years later, combined the functions of an academy of sciences, the universities and a ministry of education; it was responsible for education at all levels and all over the country, including the supply of teachers. The curriculum of the schools supervised by the Commission included Latin, Polish, religion, ethics, the elements of law, history and geography (Polish and general), mathematics, geometry, logic, science (botany, zoology, mineralogy, physics), and modern languages. Even if this ambitious program could not always be carried out, it was still a substantial advance on the half-medieval and half-humanistic, and entirely Latin, education formerly provided by

the Jesuits. The Commission attached as much importance to the dissemination of knowledge as to the propagation of civic spirit. Its aim was to inculcate into the minds of young Poles a sense of national allegiance, fidelity to the sovereign, obedience to authority, respect for law, a sense of duty to the community, and an ardent patriotism. The king and his relatives, Poniatowskis and Czartoryskis alike, played a major part in the planning and execution of educational reform. The same may be said of Stanislas's role in the literary revival: his patronage did much to rouse Polish literature from the lethargy in which it had been sunk for a century and a half. The poetry, the drama, and the political writings of his reign are yet another testimony of Poland's vitality at the time of the second partition.

Not only the ideas of men, but their environment too were undergoing a change; political and economic, as we

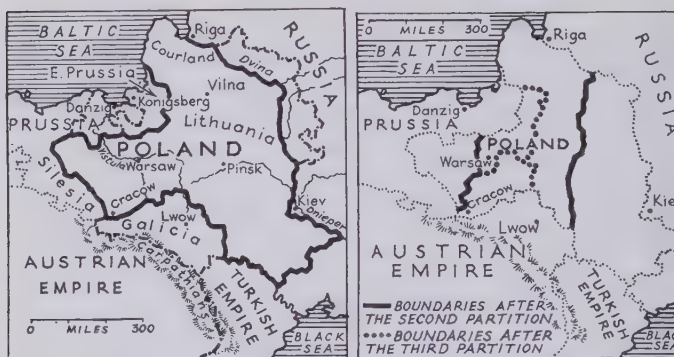
Frederick the Great (1712–86) at the age of fifty-two. "Polish Prussia," he declared, "had better not be conquered by force of arms but consumed in peace after the manner of an artichoke, leaf by leaf." (*Bettmann Archive.*)



as intellectual, factors were at work. As the central government gained in strength, the political importance of the minor gentry declined and its status as a professional clientele grew precarious. Impoverishment or a dwindling income prompted the *szlachta* to revise its attitude towards the townsmen and the peasantry. The accumulation of wealth by the pioneers of capitalism made trade and manufacture attractive and even respectable. The new frame of mind and the new type of society were most evident in Warsaw, now a city of 100,000 inhabitants. With an urban proletariat, a professional and administrative class, a major and minor bourgeoisie, a numerous foreign colony, a lively court and, since 1788, a Sejm in continual and public session; with its printing presses and coffee houses, it had at least as much in common with other European capitals, particularly Paris, as with the rest of Poland. The prevailing fashions in art, literature, and politics were those of France, and in similar circumstances the inhabitants of Warsaw might be expected to behave like Parisians.

The new constitution passed by the Four-Year Sejm on May 3, 1791, epitomizes the changes just described and indicates the extent of Poland's temporary emancipation from Russian tutelage. To criticize the constitution, as many have done, for having failed to bring about a social as well as a political revolution is to criticize it for not having done something that it was not intended to do, as must become apparent when it is examined in its historical setting.

As the deputies of the Four-Year Sejm vied with one another in eloquence, without achieving any adequate practical results, it began to look as though the unique opportunity offered by the Prussian alliance and Catherine's embroilment in Turkey was in danger of being forfeited. The Bill, which was rushed through a half-empty Chamber at the eleventh hour, accomplished the maximum that could be accomplished without antagonizing the conservative opposition as well as provoking Russia. As in the case of educational reform and of the literary revival, the King, newly swept along by the enthusiasm of the "patriotic"



Left: Poland after the first partition, 1772. Right: Poland, after her revival, 1795, swallowed by her neighbors in the partitions of 1793 and 1795. (*Maps by S. H. Perrin.*)

party, left his mark on the constitution, which bears witness to his admiration for Montesquieu and for the political institutions of England. The elective monarchy and the principle of unanimity were now abolished; the King became a constitutional monarch who could "do no wrong" but whose ministers were responsible to the Sejm; a legal distinction was drawn between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The constitution did not introduce equality of rights, but took the peasantry into the custody of the law and granted to the townsmen immunity from imprisonment without trial and the right to own land, as well as voteless representation in the Sejm. For all its semblance of a *coup d'état*, the constitution was, in fact, a compromise, a classic instance of possibilism.

It was acclaimed not only in Warsaw by the "patriots" and their supporters. Burke, who had deplored the first partition, was lavish in his praise: "In contemplating this change," he wrote, "humanity has everything to rejoice and glory in; nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to suffer. So far as it has gone, it probably is the most pure and defecated public good which has ever been conferred on mankind. The essence of his encomium is contained in three statements: "Not one man incurred loss, or suffered degradation. All, from the king to the day labourer, were improved in their condition," . . . "everything was kept in its place and

order: but in that place and order everything was bettered"; "... this great good . . . contains in it the seeds of all further improvement; and may be considered as in a regular progress, because founded on similar principles, towards the stable excellence of a British Constitution."• Stripped of their rhetoric, Burke's words express dislike of violent change, regard for the existing rights of individuals, and faith in progress.

Of these sentiments the Russian Empress shared only the first. Even twenty or so years earlier, when she was anxious to earn the reputation of a crowned and skirted *philosophe*, she forbade the tutor of the young princes of Holstein to take his charges anywhere near Lausanne or Geneva for fear of contamination with Voltairianism. Now no trace was left of this Platonic infatuation with *la philosophie*; and the Polish ultraconservatives in St. Petersburg, diehards who would sooner sacrifice the Republic's independence than accept the new constitution, were able to exploit Catherine's fear and hatred of revolution. She became convinced that the Jacobins in Paris had sent "three or four men" to assassinate her; that Mazzei, a Jacobin now in Warsaw as a guest and adviser of the King, had laid a bet that by May 3, 1792, she would no longer be alive. She was determined to fight and to defeat Jacobinism in Poland, and also to teach the Poles not to make light of Russia and to punish their King for his ingratitude. In the same year, her armies once more invaded the Republic, ostensibly to intervene on behalf of the confederacy of Targowica, formed in defense of the old order and *aurea libertas*; in fact, again to plunge the carving knife into the residue of Poland's territory. The next partition, carried out in conjunction with Prussia, followed in 1793. In 1772 partition had been declared imperative as the only means of saving Poland from anarchy; twenty-one years later, she was punished with partition for having tried to set her house in order. Here was tragic mockery indeed.

Considered in terms of international relations, the second partition recalls the first, inasmuch as it resulted from a

• *Works* (1852), IV, 478-80.

failure of the interested powers to divide European Turkey. This failure recoiled upon Poland, and the sequence of events was also affected to a considerable degree by the French Revolution. While Russia was fighting the Swedes in the north and, in alliance with Austria, the Turks in the south, Poland seized the opportunity to carry out political reform under the protection of the alliance into which she was encouraged by the recently concluded alliance between Prussia and Turkey, she entered with Prussia in 1790. In that very year, however, the situation began to alter and from the Polish point of view, to deteriorate. Russia made peace with Sweden and the new Austrian Emperor, Leopold II, expressed his readiness to negotiate with the Turks. Once Austria had thus abandoned Russia and disengaged herself from the war in the Balkans, the Polish alliance ceased to be of use to Prussia, who was no longer willing to challenge Austria's or Russia's preponderance in Central and Eastern Europe. When it came to the point, in 1792, Frederick William II failed to honor his obligation to march to Poland's rescue. Austria had made peace with Turkey in 1791; in the next year Russia followed suit and invaded Poland. Soon afterward, in face of the declaration of war made on Austria by revolutionary France, the two German powers were reconciled with one another and with Russia. Catherine was now free to proceed singlehanded in Poland if she wished; but she thought it wiser, in the end, to reward Prussia for her action against France with yet another slice of the Republic.

The question whether Prussia was a fair-weather friend or a calculating partner, or a treacherous ally, has not been resolved to this day. Some historians have affirmed that whatever Prussia's other objectives may have been, a second partition of Poland was an integral part of her program; others have shown that none of the reforms carried out by the Four-Year Sejm was in any way due to Prussia, who, on the contrary, hindered some and did not promote any others still, more lenient, have laid the blame not on Prussia but on a conjuncture beyond her control: the collapse of Pitt's "federative system." However obscure and mixed

Prussia's motives may have been, her resolve to extort Danzig in payment for her assistance is as clear as the Poles' determination to refuse it.

Situated at the mouth of the Vistula, a free city under the nominal protection of the Republic, Danzig was Poland's greatest emporium and a seat of important British (and also Dutch) commercial interests. Each year, through Danzig, in addition to lead, coal and herrings, Poland imported at least £350,000 worth of British manufactures and exported to Britain raw materials—ashes for bleaching, coarse linen, linen yarn, and timber—to the value of not less than £250,000. Nevertheless, as recently as 1788 Pitt had confessed his ignorance of Polish interests and of the Polish constitution; and a year later, when the possibility arose of expanding Anglo-Polish trade, he pronounced it too remote. Only late in 1790 did Danzig suddenly become the cynosure—though hidden from the public eye—of the constellation that the Prime Minister visualized for the preservation of peace and the *status quo* in Europe. At the conference held at Reichenbach, Austria had been "contained"; now Russia must not be allowed to keep Ochakov and the coastal area between the Bug and the Dniester lest she become the great maritime power of the south. If Russia became firmly established on the Black Sea, not only would Poland be hemmed in completely, in the north by Prussia and in the south by Russia; she would also be incapable of rendering any effective help to the Porte; her southern trade would enrich Russia and, eventually, all her exports might be diverted in that direction, to Russia's profit and Britain's disadvantage. Not only must England not lose this source of supply but she must exploit and develop it to the full, so as to free herself from economic dependence on Russia. Without Russian hemp, ship's timber, copper, iron, and linseed, England's navy could not fight or her industry produce, and an offensive war against Russia, of all countries, was out of the question. An alliance and a trade treaty with Poland, however, would both bolster up the Triple Alliance and provide Britain with the necessary naval stores.



An English cartoon of Russian ambitions, 1791: Catherine the Great strides to Constantinople, while the monarchs of Europe look up in protest. George II (fifth from left) exclaims: "What! What! What! What a prodigious expansion!"

While negotiations to this end were in progress, and the Polish constitution of May 3 was being drafted, a royal message to Parliament announced that George III felt obliged to augment his naval forces as a means of adding weight to the representations that he and his allies were making to the Empress of Russia regarding her peace with the Porte. But the "Russian Armament" failed for lack of support in Parliament and in the country. The adherents of the administration could not work up any enthusiasm for a policy whose rationale must not be fully divulged for reasons of security; the Whigs, Fox in particular, took the view that neither British interests nor the balance of power would be affected if Catherine were allowed to keep Ochakov; all knew that each year a thousand ships carried British goods to Russian ports. The Russian envoy, Vorontsov, used these circumstances to his country's best advantage. Having primed the Opposition with information about the ministry's plans and the international situation, as interpreted by himself, he went on to procure the services of some twenty newspapers and mobilize a small army of hacks who, under his personal direction, produced reams of flysheets and pamphlets including the *Serious Inquiries into the Motives and Consequences of our Present Armament*, indited by Vorontsov himself with the aid of Mr. Paradise, a friend of Dr. Johnson. The anxiety of traders and manu-

facturers having a stake in the trade with Russia was duly aroused and found vent in protest meetings at Norwich, Wakefield, Leeds, and Manchester, letters to Members of Parliament, and slogans scrawled on the street walls of London: "No war with Russia." This mood was echoed in the House of Commons, and in the Government; the Tory parliamentary majority was shrinking and the Cabinet was divided. It was not for nothing that the Russia Company had friends in high places. Pitt weakened and yielded; it "was the greatest mortification he had ever experienced."• Instead of insisting on the *status quo strict* on the Black Sea, the Government expressed its readiness to accept the *status quo modifié* and soon abandoned the idea of armed intervention. Prussia, disappointed, sought and found a rapprochement with Russia. Poland was partitioned for the second time; Russia kept Ochakov, and the Eastern Question was now posed, a legacy for the nineteenth century.

Three absolute monarchies of the old regime buried Poland, but the French Revolution did not resurrect her. During the latter days of the Four-Year Sejm, French opinion about Poland was divided. The importance of the new constitution was generally acknowledged; but, while its moderation was praised by the right, the left denied its adequacy. On two occasions the Poles sent a representative to Paris with a plea for help. Late in 1792, the Convention declared its readiness to assist all peoples wanting to regain their freedom. Encouraged by this pronouncement, the promoters of the May constitution, who had taken refuge in Dresden, dispatched to Paris General Kosciuszko who, in addition to having distinguished himself in the recent war against Russia, was also a veteran of the American War of Independence and an honorary citizen of the French Republic. The Girondin leaders, to whom Kosciuszko submitted a memorandum specifying what help was needed to re-establish liberty and national independence in Poland and drawing attention to the advantages to be derived by France from a revolution in that country, gave him a

• See Rose, *William Pitt and National Revival*, 617.

sympathetic hearing and deluded him with fantastic schemes for naval expeditions to the Baltic and the Archipelago, having already made up their minds tacitly to sanction a further partition in exchange for peace with Prussia, should the occasion arise. In any event, even if they had been willing to keep the Convention's promise, they would have been unable to do so; for, in the spring of 1793, France was fully engaged in defending her own territory. Kosciuszko returned to Dresden having achieved nothing.

The next envoy arrived in Paris at the end of the year, and once more neither a memorandum, entitled "Considerations on the Question whether in the Present Circumstances the French Republic should Take an Interest in Poland," nor his other representations elicited any reaction from the Montagnard government, bent on defending the French revolution to the exclusion of all others. The outbreak of Kosciuszko's insurrection in the spring of 1794 did nothing to alter this attitude, most probably because the Poles did not declare war on Austria as well as on Russia and Prussia. The French Republicans would not contribute a sou—did not their Polish brethren have all the resources of their country at their disposal? Only after the fall of Robespierre was the Polish envoy admitted to the bar of the Convention. Collot d'Herbois, who was in the chair, assured him of the sympathy and the admiration of the French people, pointed out that the French in fighting for their own freedom were also fighting for the freedom of the Poles, and proceeded to lecture them on the ill effects of insufficiently strong measures in a great revolution. A king, even in chains, was a constant threat to liberty, wild beasts (that is, the "aristocracy") could never be tamed, and whoever forgave them their mistakes was an enemy of the human race; only a body of truly popular representatives could ensure the insurgents' success. When in the late autumn the *Comité du salut public* decided, with a view to mounting a co-ordinated diversion by the Poles, the Swedes, and the Turks, to send to Poland an agent armed with a sum of money, the Russians had already entered Warsaw. The cost of this cautious and belated gesture was out of a

proportion to the advantage that France derived from the collapse of the Polish uprising. As its end was coming into sight, the Prussian King hastily made a separate peace with France in order to be able to give full support to his claims in Poland.

Contrary to all appearance, Kosciuszko's insurrection of 1794 was not an act of desperation. True, as a new partition was being contemplated in any case—by Russia for the sake of satisfying the greed of high officials for confiscated property and by Austria with the object of equalizing the acquisitions of the three powers—the future leaders of the revolt were convinced that Poland had nothing to lose. Nevertheless, the rising was not a gamble but a calculated risk. Kosciuszko and his associates made a number of more or less reasonable assumptions. First, they expected the Polish example to be followed by the oppressed peoples of Austria—in Hungary, Bohemia, and Galicia—of Prussia—in Silesia—and even of Russia, causing embarrassment to the enemies of France and persuading her to give full support to the Poles. Next, the movement was to be truly national, embracing not only the *szlachta* but also the peasants, who were to be won over with the gift of personal freedom and a partial remission of the *corvée*. Finally, with their participation, it was hoped to put in the field an army of 300,000 men, a militia concentrated around units of the regular army. Kosciuszko compared the internal resources of his country with those of America. Though he lamented the want of maritime strength, he was still of the opinion that "Poland would be able to defend itself against the Russian and Prussian powers." The comparison with America was misleading; but events proved Kosciuszko's calculations to have been at least partly correct. An army of about 150,000 strong was raised and supplied, and though the general mobilization proved a failure, the urban militia gave a good account of itself. But it would have taken a country many times richer, and general circumstances much more favorable, to resist the combined attacks of Russia and Prussia, unhindered as they were by natural frontiers. Kosciuszko was defeated and taken prisoner at

the battle of Maciejowice; after the storming and massacre of the suburb of Praga, Warsaw fell; Stanislas Augustus abdicated and the last partition followed. The three powers now recognized the "necessity of abolishing everything which might recall the existence of a Polish Kingdom in face of the performed annihilation of this political body" and decided "never to introduce into their titles the name or the joint description 'the Kingdom of Poland,' which would be abolished since that moment for ever."

Just as the third partition was the consequence of the two previous ones, so was Kosciuszko's uprising the final achievement of the national revival. Its leader was a product of the intellectual revolution, a protégé first of all of Adam Czartoryski, the King's uncle, and then of the King himself, trained for the army at the newly established Corps of Cadets in Warsaw, where he became an instructor, and in Paris, where America's struggle for independence came within his purview. The authors of the May constitution had acted with the pen; and, when the work of reform had been wrecked, some of them and many others resorted to the sword to re-establish political independence, so that the task might be taken up anew. Thomas Campbell bewept their failure:

In vain, alas! in vain, ye gallant few!
 From rank to rank your volley's thunder flew:—
 Oh, bloodiest picture in the book of Time,
 Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime;
 Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
 Strength in her arms, nor mercy in her woe!
 Dropp'd from her nerveless grasp the shatter'd spear,
 Closed her bright eye, and curb'd her high career;—
 Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
 And Freedom shriek'd—as KOSCIUSZKO fell!

Poland had acquired a national hero, the first since the death of John Sobieski, nearly a century earlier. The King and the egalitarian leader of the insurrection have little in common except that both—one in saving Vienna from the Turks, and the other in helping to fortify Billingsport, West Point, and Charlestown—fought for causes that

transcended the limits of exclusive national interest.

It was during this troubled period that some new Polish themes were introduced into the perpetual and multiple fugue of history. Their sound for the most part has long since faded; but some of them still resound in our day. It was then that for the first time, as in 1939, Poland's fate became, though only for a while, dependent on the attitude of England, and that the question whether Danzig should belong to Poland or to Prussia became an international issue. The instinctive response of Poland to the revolution in France, witnessed again in 1830 and 1848, was observed for the first time; a class of educated, democratically minded, and radically inclined men without private means, later to be known as the intelligentsia, made its first appearance in public life, and Warsaw acquired the undue political importance of a modern capital. The national independence, of which the partitions deprived Poland, she regained in 1918, only to be partitioned again by Germany and Russia in 1939, before finally becoming an unwilling satellite of the U.S.S.R.

This persistent repetition provokes the question whether Poland can exist as an independent state, otherwise than as a function of a simultaneous weakening of Russia and Germany. If the answer is "no," are there only two alternatives: enslavement by Germany or unnatural aggrandizement on the Baltic at her expense, truncation in the east, and subjugation by Russia in accordance with Bestuzhev's plan of two hundred years ago? The reply is far from comforting: the trend of the past two centuries has been against Poland's independence. During the years separating Kosciuszko's insurrection from the tragic celebration of its 150th anniversary in the Warsaw rising of 1944, the course of Polish history runs red with the vain attempts of self-sacrificing individuals to reverse this malignant tendency. In that period Poland was placed between two predatory nations, and now finds herself between two blocs, disputing the mastery of the European continent and of the world. So long as these deadly rivalries persist, her chances of achieving genuine independence must be regarded as virtually nil.



Isaiah Thomas: Craft, Culture, and Success in Early America

Bernard A. Weisberger

In his later years Isaiah Thomas—printer, publisher, newspaperman, historian, philanthropist, and leading citizen of Worcester, Massachusetts—liked to have his portrait painted. It was a pardonable vanity in a man who had accomplished much and was not altogether bad-looking. One of these pictures shows us his large nose, broad jaw, shrewd eyes, and full mouth, turned up slightly at the corners in a look of good-humored self-satisfaction, the look of a man who, in the modern idiom, has it made. Thomas walked into Worcester in 1775 when it consisted mainly of a long street with a schoolhouse at one end and a meeting-house at the other, surrounded by green and lovely hills awaiting spring cultivation. He was then a twenty-six year old refugee from British-occupied Boston, the owner of a press, a pro-Revolutionary newspaper suspended by the onset of war, and a considerable load of debt. When he died in 1831 he was a wealthy civic benefactor, and in one man's words, a vast number of Americans "learned their letters from his primers, got their news from his papers, sang from his hymnals, ordered their lives by his almanacs, and read his novels and Bibles." Worcester had grown with

him—it was fast becoming a major industrial city—and so had the United States, in whose founding he had played no mean part.

Conventional as it may sound, the Thomas success tale has important meaning in the American story. He was something of a type. Though by no means the first of America's self-made men, he was among the first generation to climb the heights under the new United States government, thus strengthening the national belief that such a government sustained and blessed natural ability and progress. He was a craftsman and businessman, employer and artisan, manager and debtor in one, before the growth of the economy had wrenched those categories apart. As owner of a chain of bookstores, journals, and printing houses, he demonstrated the brisk appetite for consolidation among American businessmen, and was one of those centralizing agents who gave substance to political nationalism. As a publisher he illustrated the possibilities and some of the boundaries of a new kind of culture, one that was not sustained and transmitted by civil or ecclesiastical hierarchies, but in good part by the felt necessities of the market place. "Popular culture" is not new in this country. It emerged as early as colonial times, already pragmatic, many-sided, and never able to depart very far from the needs of daily living or the understandings of plain and busy people. From the first it faced the problem of separating quantity and quality, utility and cheapness, and its solutions were not always admirable. Yet it also had life, energy, elasticity, and a potential that evoked exciting dreams. Thomas made some of it, and was himself made by it, and for Americans to know him and the likes of him better is a kind of necessary self-understanding.

Isaiah Thomas was born in 1749, the grandson of two successful merchants, and the son of a man who was pathetically purposeless. Moses Thomas, the father, was evidently born to resist the gravitational pull of respectability. He ran away as a boy to one of Massachusetts's colonial wars; he tried a hand at sailing; he kept school in Long Island; he tried small-business ventures in the West Indies; finally,

in 1752, he died, while making one of his many fresh starts in North Carolina. Peter Thomas, the paternal grandfather, punished his rolling-stone son in stern and proper fashion. He had him cut out of his will except for five shillings. The burden of Moses Thomas's sin thus fell on his widow, who was forced to break up her young family in order to keep it alive. Isaiah, at the age of six, and with only a few months of schooling, was bound apprentice to Zechariah Fowle, a printer of Boston. Isaiah was legally committed to serve Fowle until he turned twenty-one, to keep the master's secrets close, and to refrain until his majority from cards, dice, attendance at taverns, fornication, and matrimony. In return, Fowle would teach him the "art and mystery of a printer, also to read, write and cypher," and furnish meat, drink, washing, lodging, and apparel.

This fascinating system of vocational education in a simpler age was many-hued. Under it, some boys found second families in the master's home more congenial than their own. Others were overworked, beaten, and starved as badly as the more unfortunate moppets in Dickens. Isaiah's lot fell somewhere in between. He later complained that he got no help in learning reading, writing, and "cyphering," and it is certain that he was put at once to work, kindergarten-sized tot that he was, standing on a bench eighteen inches high and setting a ballad in type by hand. (Though a nonreader, he could match type to copy by comparing the looks of the letters.) Gradually he learned the art and mystery of printing, then in its technological infancy, where it remained for most of his life. The hand-set type was locked in forms, then rolled under the press, which was screwed down tight by a couple of grunting pulls on a long handle. Two men, one pulling, the other laying on the paper and removing the finished sheets, could run off two hundred impressions an hour at top speed, but usually less. Colonial printers in addition struggled with worn and broken types, replaceable only by costly imports, with coarse paper, and with homemade ink that ran in hot weather and froze in cold. To turn out handsome work was a genuine challenge. A good part of the work was dirty—

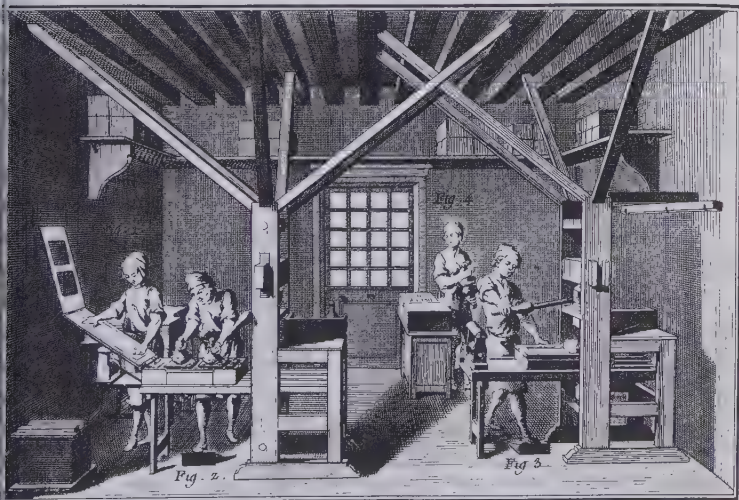
cleaning type, oiling the press, and preparing the ink. The printer himself was recognized as a businessman and artisan, but he knew what it was to dirty his hands. The journey from 'prentice to printer was in itself a rise through the levels of class structure.

Yet the printer's office was something else, too. The printer often bound and sold the works of his own press. As a sideline he might put together a weekly newspaper. Sometimes he was the local postmaster, and occasionally he dabbled in the sale of general merchandise in a corner of his establishment. Thus the apprentice was working in a bookstore, newspaper office, and postal station. The back of the shop might be dark, cluttered with rags for the papermaker and skins for binding, bundles of twine, and tubs of ink, but in the front men stopped to exchange news, to read the papers, to gossip, to browse books, and to argue theology, politics, business, and farming. And after hours the job-printing orders—almanacs, ready-reckoners, legal guides, medical handbooks, sermons, statutes and handbills—were available to read. The printing office was a kind of poor man's university, and in Fowle's shop as well as in others where he drifted on errands and to chat with fellow apprentices, Thomas (like another printer's apprentice, Benjamin Franklin) got an education more worldly and useful than any college then offered. An awareness of this had much to do with later plans of Americans like Franklin and Thomas for practical academies of learning.

The irksome part of apprenticeship undoubtedly came when the boys had grown to late adolescence, knew most of their craft already, and found the restraints of the system the more galling with independence only a few years away. Runaway apprentices were common in the colonies, to judge by the frequent newspaper advertisements for their recovery, and it was probably the more mettlesome who slipped out some quiet night with a spare shirt and a loaf stolen from the kitchen to try their luck in the world. Isaiah Thomas was one of these. In 1765 he ran away and began a five-year period of picaresque and informative roaming.

the details of which would delight a comic novelist. He wandered to Halifax, where he got a job as an assistant to a thickset Dutch printer named Anthony Henry. Henry ran a newspaper, the *Halifax Gazette*, subsidized by the provincial government, which needed such an outlet for official notices. The work of producing this journal irked Henry, an easygoing man who wanted to relax and enjoy the leisure afforded him by an inheritance from his deceased first wife. He was glad to turn the *Gazette* over to the teen-aged Boston printer's apprentice, but his gladness did not last long. The Stamp Act had recently been passed. It had ignited tempers in all the colonies, and most notably among the printers, who would bear the initial burden of buying the revenue stamps that would have to be placed on all documents, books, and newspapers. They would be the first to feel the shock of taxation without representation, not theoretically, but with painful directness. Newspapers in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston complained vigorously and not unexpectedly, but the British government in calmer Nova Scotia was startled to find the

An eighteenth-century print shop. Engraving from Diderot's *Encyclopédie*. Left: Inking the type. Right: Presswork.



Halifax Gazette joining in the hue and cry. This was the doing of Thomas, who copied and originated violent editorials denouncing the act, impudently published issues on unstamped paper, draped one issue in black, and in another ran a cut of a pitchforked devil pushing stamps down a victim's throat. Poor Anthony Henry, who did not even read his paper, found the hornets of official censure buzzing around his startled ears, and before long, Thomas was an ex-editor. He left Halifax literally without a coat to his back, but with a heady experience of journalism, self-expression, colonial patriotism, and responsibility.

Stopping for brief spells of work in Portsmouth and Boston, Thomas drifted southward, as his father had once done. He found himself in Wilmington, North Carolina, where he was urged to buy out a local printer and set up a paper. Among the chief advocates of a journal in Wilmington was a lady of ripe years who had an admiring eye for the energetic young Yankee. She owned a coffee house, and offered to stake Isaiah to a press, if he agreed that thereafter they should jointly share in the profits of printing shop and coffee house. Obviously, the sharing was not to end there. Yet neither the romance nor the deal was good enough, apparently, to keep Thomas in Wilmington. He set out for the West Indies, but a series of shipping delays left him broke and stranded in Charleston. There he settled for two or three years, working in the office of Robert Wells, printer, and publisher of the *South Carolina and American General Gazette*. It was a good place for him to finish growing up. Charleston had a cosmopolitan population of Huguenot craftsmen, rice planters with Anglican and patrician manners, horse-racing country squires, Scotch-Irish and Jewish merchants, Negro slaves, and sailors of half a dozen mingled West Indian nationalities. With its partly Latin and semitropical charm, Charleston was a good school in the ways of another world for a Boston boy. Here he learned what made Northern and Southern colonists different, and more important, what they had in common. Here he contracted a bad marriage (later ended in divorce) and good habits of observation. Here he put the fina

touches on his self-confidence, and was ready to return "home" to Boston, as a man, full of ambition and new ideas about his calling.

Thomas returned to Boston in 1770 to begin a second phase of his life. His youth behind him formally, he chose to be a newspaperman. Obviously he had gotten notions for improving newspapers while working in Halifax and Charleston. Borrowing some money, he joined Zechariah Fowle—who seemed to hold no grudge against his decamped apprentice—in launching a new paper, the *Massachusetts Spy*. The original prospectus made it clear that Thomas was already thinking in terms of journalism as a business. He aimed to win a market by enlarging, improving, and cheapening the product, meanwhile counting on increased sales to recoup the cost. He began with the experiment of issuing the *Spy* thrice weekly, although no other paper in the colonies appeared more than once a week. His guess that Bostonians would pay for more frequent news was premature, but as Thomas retreated back to a weekly publication, he compensated by enlarging the size of the sheets. *Spy* subscribers were promised handsomer typography and better paper than competitors offered, at lower prices. As for the contents, Thomas declared that he would offer "common sense in common language," which, he said, was as necessary to influence one class of citizens as learning and elegance were to attract another. His paper, in short, would be aimed at literate "mechanics" like himself. It was a bold venture in popular journalism, too bold for Fowle, who soon allowed Thomas to buy him out.

Yet the *Spy* rapidly became known not so much for its form as for its scorching anti-British content. Although the paper was begun with a promise that it would be "open to all parties, influenced by none," it soon lost its neutral character, and became a spokesman for the Americans who dubbed themselves Patriots and Whigs as they stiffly resisted, in their own view, the tyranny of Parliament and the royal ministers. Long essays bitterly challenging the royal governor of Massachusetts appeared over such classical pseudonyms as "Mucius Scaevola" and "Leonidas."

The *Spy's* four pages also found room among the exchanges, advertisements, shipping news, births, and deaths for a stream of vigorous propaganda stories. These dealt with real and imaginary mistreatment of colonists by British officials, dark designs of the ministry to reduce the provinces to "SLAVERY," and Tory plots against all things American. The Whigs, and especially Sam Adams of Boston, had discovered the effectiveness of such emotion-charged "news" in reducing abstract constitutional quarrels with Britain to the apparently simple issue of whether the colonists should live and prosper as freemen or grovel and starve as minions. Their propaganda campaign paved the way for independence, and also provoked considerable violence, from the Boston "massacre" and Tea Party, to many less celebrated mobbings and house-wreckings and tarring-and-featherings both of Patriots and Tories. For the newspapermen, this was a turbulent period of self-discovery. Until 1765 the newspaper had played an ambiguous and not always an important part among a printer's many enterprises. Beginning with the Stamp Act crisis, however, the "newspaper war" between friends and enemies of the royal government showed that these "Gazettes" and "Advertisers" could be powerful makers and movers of opinion.

Thomas and the *Spy* were in the thick of the fight. Along with the editors of the equally zealous *Boston Gazette*, he was damned by local Tories as a lying trumpeter of sedition. The Governor of Massachusetts considered arresting him, and was held back only by the reflection that no Boston jury was likely to convict Thomas of anything. One British officer, it was said, publicly promised him a coat of tar and feathers, and even in faraway North Carolina, Tories hung the fighting printer in effigy. On the other hand, Whig editors everywhere reprinted the choicest stories of the *Spy*, and hailed Isaiah Thomas as the defender of American liberties. He was a marked man, not to say, an endangered one.

Yet in the midst of this turmoil he was also a busy man. From 1771 to 1775 he was feeling his way into new publishing commitments. Patriotism was not his full-time

profession. If anything, it grew out of his loyalty to his craft, but did not supplant it. In the view of an artisan like Thomas (or his fellow member of Boston's Sons of Liberty, silversmith Paul Revere), the entire trouble with British schemes of taxation was that they would make it impossible for a man to prosper in his calling. American self-rule by elected representatives, however, would guarantee the security of property. And property was in itself an index of self-reliance, of character, of skill and diligence in its owner. Political liberty allowed talent to find its level and property its natural masters. Such a view, of course, can be analyzed as a kind of secularized (and less exciting) Puritanism, with success substituted for election, natural law for the will of God, and the self-governed commonwealth for the community of the faithful. Such a view could also, in some cases "degenerate" into an archconservatism, denying political power and opportunity to classes not yet arrived. Yet to the middle-class, conservative "revolutionaries" of 1775 it gave both the rationale and the nerve to take what were, after all, genuine risks with their lives and fortunes. What was more, it made "business as usual during altercations" a perfectly logical motto for a man of the Thomas stamp. Devising a new scheme for furnishing colonists with timely reading matter (at a reasonable return on investment) was as affirmatively American an act, to the printer, as running an editorial against the tea tax.

It was not really strange, therefore, that Thomas should launch, in 1774, the *Royal American Magazine*, a monthly devoted to the literary fare crowded out of the *Spy*, or that he should plan to serialize in it the history of Massachusetts written by Thomas Hutchinson, the royal and royalist Governor of the province. The history was a good one, and the *Royal American Magazine* was intended to give a sampling of quality in many fields. The prospectus promised not only historical and literary excerpts, but engravings, music, and advice on an assortment of topics, including love. The unsettled times proved to be too much for the magazine, which Thomas abandoned after six

issues, but he was heating up other irons. A paper established in Newburyport late in 1773, the *Essex Journal and Merrimack Packet*, died after a short life. A paper projected for Worcester in 1775, the *Worcester Gazette*, never got beyond the mere announcement of it. Thomas was more fortunate in beginning a series of annual almanacs in 1774, which ran for more than forty years. The almanac itself was something of a yearly appendix to the newspaper or the magazine. Crammed full of tidal tables, notes on the phases of the moon, agricultural hints, statistics, excerpts from public documents, specimens of "eloquence," jokes and fables and homilies, it fitted the needs of the country like a second skin. Mingling entertainment, ideas for self-help, practical medical advice, popularized history, science, and theology, folksy wit and undemanding poetry, it was the kind of "literature" enjoyed by busy people who could not always square reading with their consciences unless it had demonstrable utility, and did not simply "waste time." In its simplifying and confounding of all types of literary production—and in its implicit assumption that neither the production nor consumption of literature was the responsibility of a separate and special class of people—it foreshadowed the "middlebrow" approach of today's American mass media. In a sense, Thomas as a publisher was later to reach an enlarged almanac audience.

All of these enterprises were suddenly destroyed or suspended by the outbreak of war in April 1775. Because Thomas was almost certain to be arrested once actual fighting started, friends warned him to get out of Boston. In the nick of time he did, arriving in Worcester behind a wagonload of printing equipment on April 20, two days after the opening skirmishes at Lexington and Concord. However gratified he might be that the issue was finally joined, his own fortunes had suffered a shock. With the British encamped (in fact, besieged) in Boston, the *Spy*, Thomas's bread and butter, had lost almost its entire circulation overnight. He had counted on getting some official printing from the new revolutionary government of

Massachusetts, but only a dribble of work came from that source, which quickly dried up. Whether this was due to ingratitude among patriots, or because Worcester was too far from the outskirts of Boston, where the provincial legislature settled, is not clear. In either case Thomas had to begin once more from shirt sleeves.

There were dark years ahead. Thomas re-established the *Spy* in Worcester, sometimes continuing to run it himself, sometimes leasing it to others. He packed his family off to a New Hampshire farm and lived in his shop. One of his apprentices later remembered sleeping on piles of rags gathered for the papermaker, and making his meals, with Thomas, on bread and milk bought a pennyworth at a time. The harried printer juggled notes of indebtedness like a tipsy vaudevillian, scraped enough money together for trips to Philadelphia and New York to drum up business, and dealt with such personal problems as being drafted (he sent a substitute, who served six noncombatant months at the war's end), and handling his temperamental wife (from whom he finally got a legal separation). If his self-confidence was shaken, he did not show it. He made no move to return to Boston when the British evacuated it in 1776. He took well-remembered pleasure in reading the Declaration of Independence, which he was the first man in Worcester to see, to an assembly of his townsmen. He was also pleased with a modest enough reward for his patriotism when Benjamin Franklin, appointed by the Continental Congress as Postmaster General, made him postmaster of Worcester. Dunning subscribers, staving off creditors, begging rags for paper, and working like a cart horse seemed to toughen, rather than to wilt him.

Misfortune must have made the ultimate triumph sweeter. For, gradually, Thomas began to prosper. By 1781 he was operating the *Spy* on his own once more, and freighting it with solid fare—a full-length history of America, another of the Revolution, and a complete geography of the world all appearing in installments over a period of years. Thomas soon found out that there was a limit to how much could be crammed within the structure of

a newspaper, so in 1786 he tried the magazine field again. His *Massachusetts Magazine; or Monthly Museum of Knowledge* claimed, in optimistic eighteenth-century fashion, the whole universe of mind for its province. It was to contain "Poetry, Musick, Biography, History, Physick, Geography, Morality, Criticism, Philosophy, Mathematics, Agriculture, Architecture, Chemistry, Novels, Tales, News, Marriages, Deaths, Meteorological Observations, &c." Thomas saw himself as a kind of an entrepreneur of knowledge, linking suppliers to the market. One letter to him from an assistant advised that a man had been found "to furnish the Musick for our Magazine for one dollar per month—that it shall always be good, and adapted to the season." In short, it would be sound, marketable property. Unfortunately, or perhaps luckily for literature, Thomas could not locate equally accommodating authors to supply Physick, Geography, History, Poetry, Criticism, &c. on a regular basis, suitable to the season. The magazine folded after two years, but by that time it was a minor casualty in a growing army of Thomas enterprises.

The Thomas printing shop had become a bookselling center of first magnitude by 1786. The *Spy* was no longer Isaiah Thomas's particular trademark; the publisher had outgrown the editor. By the time the Constitution was adopted in 1789—and as a conservative businessman and nationalist now, Thomas heartily welcomed that Constitution—the Worcester shop alone stocked well over 140 titles. By 1790, Thomas had overflowed Worcester. His feet marched along a path of expansion which future business generations would wear smooth. Thomas did not precisely open branches elsewhere. In his day there was no working model of the large company headquarters with bureaucratic machinery efficient enough to co-ordinate the operations of distant subsidiaries. Instead, Thomas entered into partnerships with individuals in various towns, furnishing most of the capital, and expecting gradual repayment out of the profits. (Years before, Benjamin Franklin had pioneered as a "chain" newspaper owner in the same way, setting up his graduated apprentices with presses and

type and instructions to begin journals in various towns.) Thomas's biggest partnership was with Ebenezer Andrews of Boston, where their shop had five presses. He cast his net widely over all southern New England and eastern New York as well. The roll of these partnerships—truthfully branches—is long, because he dissolved and remade them often when they failed his expectations. At one time or another he had two in Worcester, two in Boston, one in Newburyport, one in Springfield, two in Albany, one each in Springfield, Rutland, and Windsor, and one as far away as Baltimore. His nearest publishing rivals, Matthew Carey of Philadelphia and Hugh Gaine of New York never quite reached this scope. Thomas operated his business like the partly nationalized enterprise it was, even to maintaining a courier service, which enabled the stores to exchange stock with each other, so that a title which languished in Worcester might have a new chance to prove itself by tidy sales in, say, Albany.

Meanwhile, the publisher moved into related sidelines. He bought and operated a paper mill, then a bindery, though he did not take the ultimate step of manufacturing his own types and presses. His operations remained bound together by the common thread of a printer's needs for raw materials at one end of the productive process, and distributive outlets at the other. Like Paul Revere, whose work in silver led him ultimately to engraving, and printing music, and making metal dentures, and casting bells and cannon, and finally rolling copper, Thomas was essentially an ingenious mechanic solving practical problems one at a time, and following the answers into whatever byways they led. The fact that such men were to lay the foundations of an industrial revolution, or that they were working a social change in which the entrepreneur and manufacturer would soon occupy the honored places once monopolized by landed and mercantile gentry, or men of learning, was almost incidental to them. At least they spoke and wrote little about the future, being for the most part awesomely busy in the present.

The thousand and more titles with the Thomas publish-

ing imprint were a varied reflection of the reading requirements and appetites of the young country. Just as newspaper editing was an adventure in shaping public taste, so book publishing was a challenge in probing that taste. Thomas had a long list of successful textbooks. He issued fourteen editions of a spelling book by a Scot, William Perry, and sold a total of some 300,000 copies. He ran off four editions of a dictionary by the same Perry. Moreover, he published the competing American speller of the ardent nationalist Noah Webster, and made money on it. He set his imprint on a version of Jedidiah Morse's groundbreaking *American Geography Made Easy*, and on one edition of the *American Biography* by Jeremy Belknap, pioneer American historian. The details of his correspondence with authors concerning these works—of his arrangements for royalties, reprints, and marketing—form a lively chapter of American cultural history, still awaiting a historian. Other Thomas enterprises were such hymnbooks as *New Hymns on Various Subjects* and *Laus Deo! The Worcester Collection of Sacred Harmony*, containing a number of pieces by William Billings, one of the first and most forgotten of American composers. Children's books furnished a large part of the market, with titles including standbys like *Mother Goose*, comic learners such as *The Natural History of the Beasts, Which Are to Be Met with in the Four Quarters of the Globe*, by "Charley Columbus," and "uplifting" entertainers on the order of *Be Merry and Wise; or the Cream of the Jest, and the Marrow of Maxim for the Conduct of Life*. There were on the list many ephemeral novels and tales (including a quickly abandoned printing of the salacious *Memoirs of Fanny Hill*) and such solid items as *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *A Sentimental Journey*, and *Tom Jones*. There were volumes of theology, of course, and, as pet projects of Thomas, handsome editions of the Bible. All these, and countless other works, in a professional, scientific, historical, or critical nature, were visible evidence of a book market far too complex to allow easy generalizations about the "crudity" of early American life.

Supplying that market eventually made Isaiah Thomas rich. By 1802 his fortune amounted to more than \$150,000, his town house in Boston was one of the city's finer homes, and as he walked the streets of Worcester in a blue rock coat lined with red, he could warm himself against the chilling approach of old age with the thought that he was unquestionably Worcester's prize exhibit of greatness. Visiting dignitaries shook his hand, sat down to his table, admired his handsome volumes, and wrote of him in their journals. The price of this civic success was, of course, to be drafted for committees and tapped for charitable gifts. There is every evidence that Thomas, who had no intention of slowing down as he aged, paid the price gladly. He held seats on the directing boards of Worcester's first bank, a company that built a turnpike to Boston, and a tanyard (which may have produced its share of skins to bind Thomas titles). He also sold many of his enterprises when it was no longer fun to watch them grow, put part of the proceeds into income-producing real estate, and undertook a series of philanthropies. The guiding spirit behind them remained utilitarian—a site for the Worcester County Courthouse, a sum for the local fire society, the circulating library, the Bible society. There was some money, too, for printers' academies, to train boys in the craft that had done so well for Thomas. And it was this persistent interest in the art that he had begun to learn as a six-year-old, steetering on Zechariah Fowle's bench in front of a type font, that led Thomas to two of his most lasting accomplishments.

For Thomas, love and work were one. He was proud of the part that printers had played in justifying America to the world through "common sense in common language." In Europe, the various crafts and their guilds had a rich body of history and tradition, which often enough shaped their ends and governed their behavior and standing in the broad world. In the United States it almost seemed that the tide was reversed, that the institution took shape first, and the recollection of things past came later. Already Thomas had joined with other printers and book-

sellers in Boston to found the Faustus Association. Other similar clubs for trading the lore and gossip of the craft were being born. But there was no history of the printer in America. Thomas came to a characteristic conclusion. He would write one. For years he had sold the products of other men's intellects. Now he would try his own hand at creating some of the "history" that his newspapers, magazines, and books had so often tendered to readers.

First came the work of collecting. Thomas interviewed doddering old men who had sweated at hand presses during George Washington's boyhood. He invaded the storerooms of old printing offices, the basements and attics of private homes, of courthouses, and of whatever nooks and warrens might contain specimens of old presswork. He advertised for, and bought, entire sets of aging newspapers—precious rarities today, but sold to him for a song. Few holders of these antiquities saw much value in them. Even Thomas, as a self-made historian, was not conscious of changing an age's conception of history. Yet his work was paving the way for the study of social history. In time, the collection, arrangement, and interpretation of the everyday artifacts and common accessories of a people's daily life would become a major task of scholarship. History would move from palace and battlefield into kitchen and workshop and barn, sometimes for trivial ends, but sometimes to make discoveries that brilliantly illuminated the events of palace and battlefield. Thomas had no presentiment of this, so far as the record shows. He simply sat at his desk and carefully, painstakingly, straightforwardly wrote his two volumes on *The History of Printing in America*, which appeared in 1810. The prose was unornamental and sometimes rambling. Time has yielded up corrections for many of the facts excavated by Thomas. Yet the book remains one of the basic sources for its subject; it can be corrected, improved on, and departed from, but not ignored. It is an intriguing and pioneering work of one self-tutored American mind, and all in all, a final tight and workmanlike job from a spirited but careful hand.

With the work completed, Thomas found himself t

owner of a considerable library of Americana. Feeling the need to do something with it that would be "of distinctive service to posterity," he consulted with other Worcester friends, and drew up the plans for the American Antiquarian Society. He donated the site for its first building and the money for 150,000 bricks; he bequeathed his library to the Society, and was its first president. Today it is one of the great centers for the study of early American life, and of the culture that took shape in the bustling world of men-on-the-make which Isaiah Thomas knew. The trappings and rewards of scholarship were now the old man's for the asking. He was elected to membership in the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New York Historical Society, and the American Philosophical Society. Dartmouth and Allegheny colleges each honored him with a degree. He must have relished those richly, remembering the few months of formal schooling, pieced out by Zechariah Fowle's uncertain instruction and his own efforts.

By the time Isaiah Thomas died, the world was moving ahead at breathtaking speed. He and his kind had laid the foundations for a complicated industrial order. In that order, it was harder for a man to play so many parts with such meager preparation—perhaps impossible for him to enjoy such triumphant vindication of his self-reliance and diligence in his business. It is idle to speculate on what an Isaiah Thomas born a century and a half later might have become. And yet, if somehow the old man's ghost could, at this very writing, haunt some convenient public library, would it be altogether startled to see some contemporary specimens of the printer's art? Would it be totally unready for a "digest," a news magazine, a picture weekly, a paperback, a do-it-yourself manual? One wonders exactly how *much* of Isaiah Thomas's America has gone forever to join the shadows of the past.

A Historian-Adventurer

Alfred Vag

One is tempted to call the situation one of mutually arranged "closed seasons"—the German hunter's term. *Schonfristen* might fit the case even better—between sociologists and historians: for as though by long-standing agreement, neither party has leveled its guns at the other's preserves. So far, sociologists have refrained from writing a sociology of historians and historiography. In a reciprocal manner, historians have as yet produced no history of sociology, though they have commented upon the tendencies of sociology, notably the older, Comtean school, to presume that knowledge of contemporary and past societies enabled it to make plans for its future—*savoir pour prévoir*—when none but the boldest historian would believe that a professional looking-backward might help in analyzing the present, much less looking to and prognosticating about the future.

Should either sociologists or historians themselves whose histories of historiography so far have almost exclusively been dedicated to the currents of historical thought rather than the lives of the members of the p



Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), the great German historian opposed by Gustav Adolf Bergenroth. (*Bettmann Archive.*)

ession—ever come to generalize on the historian, they could hardly fail to observe that his life has usually been quiet, almost from the outset, uneventful, if not withdrawn, so conducted as to favor meditation and the careful collection from archives, excavations, libraries, and studies, of the data or “facts” on which his writings and lectures could be based. To be sure, quite a number of historians have been “in politics” of one sort or another: Thucydides; Machiavelli; Guicciardini; Thiers, who was incidentally probably the richest of all historians; Bancroft; Mommsen, who was a Liberal member of German Diets for nearly twenty years; or the recently deceased Walter Goetz, who was a Democratic Reichstag member during the Weimar Republic and who, considering forms of “resistance” against the Hitler regime, conceived the idea, well before 1945, that the time was coming to prepare for a new national biographical dictionary to be written and published promptly after the expected fall of the Third Reich. But among the scholar adventurers one will not easily find a historian, and the still-growing “bureaucratization,” to use a short-cut term, of this science as of all others, is not likely to produce or suffer him.

In all the long gallery of historians since Thucydides we have encountered one figure truly *hors de série*, or, and only one scholar who was forced for a time by violence of circumstances or temperament out of the role of detached observer of past events. This was "King" Bergenroth, Prussian duelist and utopian dreamer, so haply connected with frontier development in California, who was called even in his lifetime the "adventurer-historian" by a better-known fellow writer and compatriot, Ferdinand Gregorovius, the author of the history of medieval Rome, who had known him well since their student and fraternity days. Both Gregorovius and Gustav Adolf Bergenroth (1813-69) to give him his full name, that of the Swedish Lutheran King, came from the province of East Prussia and from a Liberal background not readily identified with this Junker country which, however, was also the land of Kant, and Heinrich von Schön, one of the men of the Prussian Reform, of a sort of perpetual Fronde, generally. The Bergenroths were an outspoken Liberal family, the father a member of the lower judiciary, set back in his career because of his views, and one of the brothers a Radical member of the Prussian Diet (1871-85); it was a Liberalism that flourished on the frontier of Germany, along the border of Russia. Bergenroth himself was, in his early years, once caught venturing beyond limits and held briefly as a captive by a Cossack patrol.

As a youth, Bergenroth underwent the voluntary hardships of the *Turner* movement in and out of the near-primeval forests along the Prusso-Russian border, becoming a skillful hunter and prepared for life along a frontier of civilization. (The Prussian one had not a little in common with the American, as writers on the latter would observe when American-Prussian relations were friendly, before they deteriorated to the point where, without American assent, Königsberg, the city of Kant, became Kaliningrad.) At the University of Königsberg, where he duly became the head of his fraternity, Bergenroth was a much feared duelist; but also handsome in person, 'with singularly fascinating manners," he was well received

society, whether provincial or later *mondaine*. A frontier belle to whom he became engaged, but whom he never married wept for him all her life, in East Prussia and later in Italy.

Despite such a seemingly irregular and dissipated life, Bergenroth passed all the examinations for a career in the Prussian civil service creditably, and after serving in the Eastern provinces obtained more coveted positions in Berlin and Cologne. In the pre-1848 Rhineland he became acquainted with the ideas and the followers of early socialism, including Saint-Simonism. He knew Marx and Engels personally, by 1845 at the latest, and spoke in early Communist meetings in Rhineland-Westphalia. He began to write for Radical publications, but also contributed to Reden's *Statistisches Jahrbuch*—there was always this "solid side" in his life and writings. His more scholarly productions failed to free him from the suspicions of his superiors, who readily granted him an extended leave, which he spent in Italy, and who only reluctantly readmitted him to the service after he had overstayed his leave by many weeks. He continued to be employed, however, on questions of economy and statistics, and was given hopes for a time that he might enter diplomatic service and thus be enabled to travel far from East Prussia, seeking "change of locality, this medicine of the sick in spirit," to use the terms of an older psychology. He was at least able to move the authorities to send him in 1847 on statistical studies to Paris, where he renewed his contacts with several brands of socialism and socialists of the day. Back in time for the Berlin March Revolution, he probably fought on the barricades—"Where have the jurists been wanting on the battlefield when it was a question of defending popular rights, of fighting for the palladium of liberty?" asked Mommsen, the historian who began as a lawyer, in 1843. Soon Bergenroth became "a revolutionary club leader and press editor" and was elected to the Prussian Diet by a Pomeranian constituency, until reaction, which gained the upper hand in Berlin in the autumn of 1848, made it impossible for him to live and work in Prussia any longer.

Shaking off the sandy dust of Berlin and bureaucracy he wrote the Minister of Justice that his own political views for the time being did not permit him to remain in state service and that he would have to wait for a time when another Minister would head the Justice Department. He continued his polemical writing, attacking as an Enemy of the Elbian the reactionary elements that were recuperating from their first defeat in that region, and directing a brochure, "*Herr von Bülow-Cummerow unter den Communisten*" against the founder of the Junker Society for the Protection of Property and the Furtherance of the Prosperity of All Classes of the People (1849). This was one of the earliest of several organizations launched from time to time by the Junkers, making use of that newly won freedom of assembly which they had not originally wanted but which now and again was turned to working for them in an age of mass organizations and helping to maintain the seemingly outdated sway over Prussia, if not the entire Reich.

Knowing the Prussian police well from the inside, Bergenroth was bold enough to return to Berlin on some occasions, such as the liberation, directed by Carl Schurz, of the poet-professor-politician Gottfried Kinkel from the fortress of Spandau. In this venture, Bergenroth played a helping role. But when the victory of reaction in Prussia and beyond seemed final, Bergenroth like Schurz and many others went beyond the seas.

Chosen by a group of like-minded men who intended to settle *en Icarie*, in one of those transatlantic Communist settlements, he sailed in July 1850 for California, the newly created, still somewhat incomplete state that saw at the same time the arrival of Heinrich Schliemann, later famous as an amateur archaeologist and uncoverer of Troy. "The hopes of social regeneration, so cruelly blighted in the old world, it was fondly believed might still be realized in the new," said Bergenroth's biographer Cartwright. But the utopian had a bitter awakening: robbed of his political longings while helpless with disease, Bergenroth was put ashore in San Francisco and was saved from death only

the exertions of a kind-hearted woman. The Prussian bureaucracy for once failing him—the consul turned down his application for assistance—Bergenroth first attempted gold-digging and then, relying on his rifle for a living, led a hunter's life along the California frontier. There he observed the rise and functioning of the Vigilante Committees, later described by him quite graphically for Charles Dickens's *Household Words* (November 15, 1856). In this, his first essay in the English language, he gave a picture of the pirates and rustlers, such as Blue Jacket and Crow's Head, who preyed upon the Spanish cattle-queen, Señora Cornelia; he had seen this duchess of the wilderness herself, arrayed in gold chains and pearls, riding on a huge wagon, drawn by two bullocks and sixteen mules, over the roadless land. He was present also at the hanging of Crow's Head, when the tolling of the fire-engine bell summoned the Vigilantes to the torch-lit streets of San Francisco, and, after the practice of lawless law, "there remaining the excitement of joyous triumph through the town, and quantities of champagne and punch were drunk in the stores." This "frontier justice,"• as Bergenroth observed from the class angle, made "the upper classes even more afraid of the excited multitudes than of daring thieves and corrupt judges." His descriptions must have given readers sheltered in the British Isles some welcome shudders.•• The

• Another temporary German-Californian, Julius Fröbel, found "a crime committed in the wilderness or in a still chaotic state of society not only generally but also with regard to the character of the doer something quite different from a crime committed in the midst of civilization, just as the shedding of blood on a battlefield is something quite different from that shed in a murderer's den; and in the rough life of North American wildernesses where everyone is his own sovereign, everyone is allowed to be his own soldier."

•• B.'s contribution, reprinted as late as 1929 in *The Magazine of History* "as a valuable and also readable item of California life," must have suited the program of H. W.: It was to be animated by "no mere utilitarian spirit, no iron binding of the mind to grim realities"; it was to "cherish that light of Fancy which is inherent in the human breast. . . . The adventurer in the old fairy story, climbing the steep mountain, was surrounded by a roar of voices, crying to him, from the stones in the way, to turn back. All the voices *we* hear, cry Go on! . . . We echo the cry, and go on cheerily!" (Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens*.)

best letter-writer among Bismarck's diplomats, Kurd von Schlözer, described Bergenroth's further California adventures after a meeting with him in Rome in 1867:

His intelligence soon created for him in the whole region such an authority that some seventy colonists from all lands assembled around him and paid homage to him as their chieftain. He now founded an independent principality in which he lived as an autocrat. A deserted village became his residence. But since it was situated in a frontier region, he soon got into trouble with the Americans, who drew up two pieces of cannon, supported by cavalry, against King Bergenroth. In the meantime, money for him had arrived from Europe . . . and he then gave up his dominion in order to retire to England. As King he designed three death sentences, but he is proud of the fact that he never executed them.

The "outlaw king"—like the one in the early English romance of Gamelyn and his "liberal outlaws," who knew that "he most needes walke in woode that may not walke in towne"—was back in Europe late in 1855, "*sans argent* and with sickness," as Marx wrote to Engels, "after he had drifted around in America, North and South, as commissary in trade affairs." As was to be expected, the father of "scientific" socialism felt a negative reaction to the still continued "romantic" belief of Bergenroth, the utopian turned temporarily autocrat,[•] that communist settlement in California was quite feasible. However, his original backers were now either reconciled to the power in Europe, like Louis Napoleon, or felt too utterly crushed to emigrate.

After an unsteady and precarious life as tutor and journalist in sundry European countries, and still harassed by the Prussian police when he showed his face in Germany, Bergenroth suddenly "reformed" in a very unexpected way. From the spring of 1857 he had been among the most assiduous users of the recently opened London Public

• Since not a few leaders in the American wilderness turned to autocratic government, men like George Rapp of Harmony or Brigham Young, the question might be raised whether the Turnerian frontier democracy was not typically preceded by phenomena of a proto-authoritarianism.

Record Office, with the purpose in mind of writing a history of Tudor England, of producing a great literary work that might earn him money and fame as it was doing for Thiers, for example, or on a somewhat more modest and solid scale, for Ranke, or Gregorovius. His historiographical debut was hardly suited to these ends, however: an article on the Wat Tyler rising ("*Der Volksaufstand in England im Jahre 1438*"), published in 1860 in the second volume of Sybel's *Historische Zeitschrift*, the paragon of all scientific magazines of history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It passed editorial scrutiny when Bergenroth reminded the guild, whose members have granted him but scant recognition for it, of the constant need for historical revisionism and relativism:

The historiography of no period can ever be considered final; the work of historians was not a superfluous luxury but derived from imperative, deeply felt needs of the age; each new stage of development produces new interests, views, and wants, each age wants to know how *that* very problem which occupies *it* before all others, has developed in the past; it wants therefore to have the old familiar themes treated from its own point of view, in its own light.

One such old burning question, newly ablaze, the relation of the classes to one another, was illustrated by the Wat Tyler episode. (The term "classes" had not then obtained the opprobrium into which the use and overuse of it by Marxism has brought it since. It was originally a neutral word, as was also the term "proletariat," so thought Bergenroth, who used it himself reluctantly, "because it reminds one of the modern socialist systems; but the term has not come into use in our own time merely, it was used in the same manner in the Middle Ages.")

To Bergenroth, the conflict of bourgeoisie and proletariat in Wat Tyler's time appeared in such acuteness that it would be wrong to give the thing itself as indistinct term merely in order to avoid a prejudicial appearance. It was a true social conflict, due to the joint endeavor of royalty, nobility, and newly rising middle classes to control the wages of the workers, whose labor, due to the recent man-

eating Black Death, had for the first time assumed scarcity value and who were in a position to raise demands of their own, including free hunting and fishing (shades of California!). Because of material circumstances, the cause of the conflict between possessors and nonpossessors arose quite independently of the will of the two parties concerned. The outcome of the movement, a failure partly due to errors of leadership, was that "the lower classes became more subject to the upper than at any time before. This reaction, however, fared as reactionary movements often do. Outward power was restored, but the moral one remained broken. Serfdom would no longer flourish in England. Besides, it had lost its value," as compared with free labor. "The residue of feudalism and the legal subjection of one class under another was removed soon after the Restoration of Charles II. From that time dates the struggle of the classes, which is based on foundations of national economy."

At this point, a comparison of Bergenroth's article with Engels's *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg* (1850) is in order, the main point of difference being that the first was definitely more scientific and the other more "agitatory" in character and intention. Both productions are upshots of that "historical materialism" which, once it had been postulated, has striven ever since, with largely insufficient means, to furnish "scientific" proof of the thesis in the form of actual historiography. It has tried—though late in catching up—to approximate in scientific thoroughness bourgeois history with its researches, methodical character, and vast documentary publications.

Bergenroth's own subsequent development in this field took off in two directions: one that must be called sensationalist and another that was truly scientific. To the former belongs the violent attack he published, in the same year as the Tyler article, on Ranke and his recently printed *Englische Geschichte*, and on his methods generally. This appeared in Gustav Freytag's magazine *Die Grenzboten* and it must be said at once that it was largely unjustified, grossly overdone in its material criticism, and almost

scurrilous. It was, however, symptomatic of the Ranke criticism that the largely hagiographical treatment of that historian has not yet assembled, and which runs from Karl Marx, on the political wing—to whom Ranke was “the dancing *Wurzelmännchen*” with his “playful anecdote-retailing and the reduction of all great events to pettiness and lousiness”—to that of artists like the sculptor Adolf Hildebrandt, who was to call Ranke “a smoothing, mediating portraitist who leaves on man no sharp corners and who draws in a more appeasing than striking manner. A historian, however, must feel the monster within himself in order to understand it in others; he seems to me too good-natured.” What irritated Bergenroth in Ranke, as he wrote later, was

not this or that error of detail, but a false ground-tone, running all through, and which is deliberate. . . . His history of Germany in the Reformation period is bad if viewed as the final result of historical writing, and the work of a master. It is good—very good—if taken as a step from worse to less bad. But how many masters have there been in the world, and more than this, how many writers are there, who have as much merit as Ranke?

Of a very different character was the other endeavor into which Bergenroth channeled his energies, one that even the Ranke disciples were willing to praise. This was an attempt to penetrate the still-unexplored realm of Spanish archives. Finding the London archival materials insufficient for his purpose in compiling data for his Tudor history, and being denied, as a matter of course, access to the Vatican repositories, he turned toward Spain. He suspected that there was a treasure of relevant documents in the store-rooms of Spain, the diplomatic pivot of his period, especially at Simancas. Resolving to storm that nearly inaccessible citadel, the medieval fortress with its thirty-three million documents (estimate of 1910), he proposed to open it for himself and perhaps for others as well. Prussian diplomacy, of the pre-Bismarkian school, obviously uninformed about the police suspicions that clung to Bergenroth, opened the way that but a few scholars had trod before him, in the

summer of 1860. Once inside, the struggle for perfectly free access to the thousands of *legajos* (bundles) proved even harder than the original siege: Bergenroth encountered resistance and sabotage on the part of the archive officials, and resistance on the part of the documents as well, for they were ciphered in a dozen ways with no key available, and had to be decoded by the reader.

Living conditions at Simancas proved almost as primitive as on the California frontier. Taking up quarters in a peasant home in the squalid village at the foot of the castle, he endured the violence of the Castile climate which dried his ink in summer and froze it in winter; his dark abode lacked stove and window-glass. He slept on a straw sack, cooked his own food, and bathed in the river; he was afflicted with malaria. Very often the archives were closed on account of feast-days, dancing, and bullfights, and then Bergenroth joined the villagers in their celebrations, which he described in letters to the London *Athenaeum* which carry some of the color and vigor of George Borrow's accounts of Spanish gypsy life. Every precious hour that the archives were open, he walked up to the castle to pursue his enormous task. Fascinated by the materials he found, Bergenroth thought of himself as

a literary Don Quixote. Why do I endure the hardships of my life in Simancas? Why do I pass month after month over these papers, filled with letters almost as difficult to read as the hieroglyphics of Egypt? Have not the most brilliant reputations been won by historians who have contented themselves with arranging and breaking up the old well-known traditions, occasionally adulterating them from party-spirit? And yet, I am afraid, I have not the strength of will to leave off before I have read all the papers in question.

The *Athenaeum* letters attracted the attention of the Master of the Rolls, Sir John Romilly, who sent an emissary of the Public Record Office to Simancas to see Bergenroth in action. His testimony was enthusiastic: "Nothing but the strongest desire to do service to history could reconcile any man to so much hardship . . . especially a

Mr. B. undertook it all in the first instance from his sole desire to advance the study of English history, without any prospect of remuneration for his labours." The Master was convinced that Bergenroth was the man to collect and edit a contemplated series, a Calendar of State papers relating to English history in Simancas and elsewhere in Spain.

The mission, with a modest remuneration, was handed to Bergenroth, who might have shouldered it with the sort of sigh uttered by Mommsen, when he started on the *Corpus* of the Roman inscriptions fifteen years earlier: "How much rather than making bricks for other people would I prefer to build houses myself!" Neither intended to be quite that selfless. Like Mommsen, with whose labors (sometimes in ice and snow, which had to be scratched away to get at an inscription) those in Simancas may well be compared, Bergenroth was determined to use for himself as many bricks as he could turn up. Among the later users of his work was Froude, and others turned to his results, which were assembled in a first volume of the *Calendar of the Documents in the Simancas Archives Relating to English Affairs from 1485-1509, with Additions from Archives in Brussels, Barcelona, etc.* (1862); this was followed in 1868 by a volume covering the reign of Henry VIII and a supplementary volume. Even the Ranke disciples had to admit and praise the solidity and methodicalness of his researches, though exception was being taken to the use of "strong expressions which do not agree well [!] with historical truth" (Pauli), which is almost tantamount to declaring that a *chronique scandaleuse* can never be truthful. They also objected to the inclusion of—or as they thought, the emphasis on—unedifying episodes of history around 1500.

In Rankean history writing, the so-called *Dezenzschranke* (decency barrier) was usually clamped down hard to as "to spare feelings" or keep up the prestige of diplomacy as an estate, lest it suffer by documents such as those that

Bergenroth offered with obvious relish—among them a seat on the Spanish minister to London in the 1490's, who lived for years in the house of a mason who made money by keeping disreputable women under his roof. The diplomat took his dinners with them and the apprentices, at a reduced price. The loss on his bills, if any, was made good by the housekeeper robbing other gentlemen who would come to the house; and when they went to the police to complain, the Spaniard, who was on excellent terms with Henry VII, gave his host protection against the law. This unseemliness was reported to Ferdinand and Isabella, who did not, however, recall him, so well were they satisfied with his labors, which in any case were never very regularly paid for.

Whichever way it was "determined" in the last analysis—whether by a lonely and rootless life spent on travels that brought him together with the best, or better, part of European society of his time, or by the need to earn a living by literary labor in the field of historiography, where Ranke seemed to him forever *the* competitor—Bergenroth's view of history assumed increasingly an *enfant terrible* character. Bent on "revising," he ran into the face of established concepts, and, more unfortunately, of the results of better judgments and researches than his own. For example, he tried to prove that Juana la Loca was not originally mad, that she might have been driven insane by the doings of her parents and her brother Charles V, who thought her a heretic; or that Don Carlos was a reputable character almost as presented by Schiller in his drama, rather than the one described by Ranke. Neither thesis (the one about Juana reminds one of the hope and wish of the Castilian Comuneros of 1520–1 to find her sane enough to make her their lawful queen) proved tenable: about Juana's early madness there can be as little doubt as about the despicable, half-mad character of Don Carlos.

While he bent over the Simancas bundles and kindred

documentary repositories, Bergenroth's interest had shifted to the reign of Emperor Charles V, whose history he intended eventually to write. His basic thesis was to be that Charles in his vast desire for world dominion over lands and minds had foundered on the resistance of both Catholic and Protestant churches. Before Bergenroth had gone very far on this, typhoid fever, aggravated by the unsanitary conditions of Simancas and Madrid, cut his life short at the age of fifty-six, an age that again sets him off from other historians, whose longevity has been remarkable. Thus ended a lonely historian, "his life a novel . . . the former Royal Prussian Appellate Court Assessor from East Prussia . . . first a king and then an English historian . . . so well acquainted with the sixteenth and seventeenth [more correctly, the fifteenth and sixteenth] centuries as if he had lived together with all the outstanding personalities of those ages," as Kurd von Schlözer wrote of the man he had encountered in Roman society.

By the time of his death, the institutionalizing—in the universities and in vast documentary collections—of historical research, teaching, and writing had well begun, increasingly state-financed and state-controlled, if often only remotely. The number of historians of amateur status was already shrinking, relatively speaking, although men like Carlyle, Grote, and Prescott, of the older generation, held out against the general tendency, as did Schliemann, Lord Acton, and Gregorovius, who, however, was the recipient of an unsolicited Prussian state grant after his first volumes had appeared. The ever-rising current of state control was to become most complete in the case of the onetime opposition school, historical materialism, following the Russian Revolution of 1917. Bergenroth, the former civil servant who had learned methodicalness of labor, the adventurer who had undergone an apprenticeship and *Wanderjahre* in the no man's land of California, had been forced to become the part-time servant of this tendency, if only to gain a living that he earned by an

industriousness and ingenuity quite equaling the toil of the Ranke disciples.

Unlike his rivals of the Ranke school, he remained forever tempted to fly in the face of established convictions and reputations and, alas, too-well-verified views in the cases he chose for controversy; he chose to put in a lurid and melodramatic light figures on the past who were beyond revision and redemption. He found episodes in sixteenth-century history where "the real facts of the story" could not be "more licentious, more filthy, and more extravagant than a sensational novel of the lowest kind and calculated only for readers of Holywell literature." Laboring in the heyday of Carlyle—who was not much seen in archives, although on occasions on the Silesian battlefields of his Frederick the Great—Bergenroth could uncover nothing in the state papers that "justifies hero-worship. I am most emphatically a non-hero-worshipper." But this was not to deny a moral progress of mankind since the sixteenth century or earlier, that certain advances of humanity in which his fellow countryman Kant had believed. If this were not so, Bergenroth thought, if progress were

denied to us, a wise man will give up striving after it, and turn materialist. Happily, historical truth is teaching other morals. The world we live in is not stationary, that is to say, in a period of decay. We and our fathers and grandfathers have not striven in vain, and if our children do not give up the battle, but earnestly and seriously continue to strive after perfection, civilization is not lost, and Europe will not relapse into a state of chaotic barbarism. Those who tell us that the old Britons and Saxons and Normans, and so on, were as good men, or better, than we, are, I think, mistaken in so far as historical facts are concerned, and preach at the same time dangerous morals.

Literary ambition may be laid at Bergenroth's door, a tendency toward what later was to be called, often not without some envy, "historical belle-lettrism," as exemplified by the writings of the immensely successful Emile Ludwig and André Maurois, arising from the demands of the literary market on the completely self-employed his-

torian as regards choice of subject and weight of emphasis. • On a deeper level of motivation, the striving for a political effect often got the better of an original and solid mind, distorting his historical materialism, if by that is meant the careful consideration of economic factors and the most judicious use of documentary material. But he still belongs to the roster of honest if erratic contributors to historiography, none of his vagaries ever interfering with a devotion, nearly ascetic in character, to the discovery, deciphering, and editing of source materials.

• A comparison with Ranke's outlook on scandalosa may not be amiss; when he came to deal with one of history's strangest figures, the courtesan empress Theodora, whose charity, as Gibbon archly writes, "was universal," Ranke only commented: "There are always two divergent views: The one eyes the general achievements in war and policy, the other keeps to the personal qualities, which as a rule give rise to various censures. Nowhere does this divergence appear more strongly than in the case of Justinian, whose governmental actions made epoch in world history whereas his domestic affairs have provoked many not unjustified slanders. We here have to do above all with the former."

The Quest for Ancestors and Traditions

Edward N. Savett

A university professor from Vermont did not exaggerate when he said in 1886 that Americans would rather know who their grandfathers were in the year 1600 than who the next President would be. Urban America, particularly, seemed to be engulfed in a wave of ancestor-consciousness. It was as though an invisible finger pointed and an inaudible voice questioned: "Who are you?" and "Where are you here?" and "What is the manner of your belonging to the American scene?" Presumably, locked in the past were answers to questions of worth and worthiness, superiority and inferiority; belonging and not belonging. History was ransacked by professional and amateur historians seeking to uncover events and ancestors justifying present status. In the 1890's, a number of newspapers established genealogical departments and the Lenox Library in New York, which in 1896 had purchased one of the country's largest genealogical collections, set aside a room "for the convenience of the large number of searchers after family history."

The interest of Americans in their ancestry did not begin in the late nineteenth century. In October 1869, the

magazine *Galaxy* said that "it is an apt and eloquent commentary on the Democracy in America, that the books most constantly in demand, in proportion to their number in this library [Lenox] are those in the subjects of Heraldry and Genealogy." Intensification of the search for ancestral roots in the late 1880's and in the 1890's was a reflection of individual insecurity emergent from the flux and turmoil of the times. Successive crises during the nineteenth century's last decade marked the culmination of long-term trends in American life which had been germinating since the conclusion of the American Civil War: the impact of industrialism; the popular misconception, encouraged by Turner's famous essay on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," that the agricultural frontier was soon to be a thing of the past if it was not so already; and, finally, the crowding problems of urban life. These were impressed upon the consciousness of the American people by the depression that began in 1893; the strike at Pullman; the violence at Homestead and Cripple Creek; by such dramatic and featured events as the march of Coxey's tatterdemalion army; by Bryan throwing down the gauntlet in 1896: "upon which side will the Democratic party fight; upon the side of 'the idle holders of idle capital' or upon the side of 'the struggling masses.' " All this happened, or seemed to happen, with disturbing suddenness.

The American city was the most sensitive barometer of change. Since the Civil War, urban centers had been growing in number, geographic area, and in population. Their complexion, too, was changing. Countrymen by the thousands were deserting the placidities of rural life for the excitements of the city. The census of 1890 revealed that the decline of the rural population was no longer confined to the Northeast, where the trend had been in evidence for some time, but had spread as well to the South and Middle West. The poet might sing, as did Hamlin Garland, of fields of wheat "deep as the breast of a man, wide as a sea, heavy-headed, supple-stalked, many-voiced, full of multitudinous, secretive, whispered colloquies." But it was

the city that in this era captured the imaginations of farmers and, especially, their wives and children.

The urban population was swelled and its discordance increased by the tremendous influx of immigrants, particularly from Southern and Eastern Europe. The advent of large numbers of the so-called "new immigrants" was viewed with a combination of distrust and distaste by Americans of Northern and Western European origin and ancestry whose roots in urban living reached back one or more generations. Between urbanites of low economic status and the newcomers, there was more or less continuous seething conflict over jobs and living quarters which erupted occasionally in ugly riots. The urban middle class, which was above the brickbat and the brass knuckle even as it was removed from the harsher aspects of life's struggle on the margin of existence, was nonetheless troubled by problems of housing, poverty, disease, sanitation, and crime that the presence of the newcomers seemed to intensify—to say nothing of the effect upon realty values as the immigrants spilled out of the slums and impinged upon the outskirts of middle-class neighborhoods.

The patricians, who were richer, more powerful, and more exclusive in their interactions than the others—did not, as a rule, have too much contact with the invaders. However, even the most aloof of the patricians were aware that the immigrants were acquiring votes and becoming the pawns of venal politicians. In New York, shortly after the conclusion of the American Civil War, the diarist George Templeton Strong—"three generations" of whose forebears "attended regularly at Trinity or St. Paul's"—complained that "New Yorkers belong to a community worse governed by lower and baser blackguard scum than any city in Western Christendom, or in the World, so far as I know. Our rulers are partly American scoundrels and partly Celtic scoundrels." The Celts, he thought, predominated and "the gorilla is their superior in muscle and hardly their inferior in moral sense."

On Boston's Beacon Hill, Francis Parkman moodily and unrealistically contemplated limiting the voting rights

the newcomers. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., dismayed by the immigrant invasion of Quincy, Massachusetts, "the Adams race-place," simply gave up and removed to a more rural part of the state.

America, especially urban America, was at that time and to some extent is today, a hierarchy of immigrant groups with socio-economic status determined roughly by recency of immigration. Many members of the urban middle class could recall a father or grandfather who came from Ireland, Germany, or Scandinavia; a childhood spent in a slum no better than those inhabited by the Poles, Slavs, Jews, Italians, and other Southern and Eastern European nationalities. They could feel, more than they cared to admit to themselves and to their neighbors, with this outcast lot. These feelings were sharpened by the crises of the nineties. Unemployment, breadlines, Christmas baskets, and deflation were proof that the American dream bubble was not puncture-proof, that one could descend as well as ascend the economic ladder.

From the rapid changes in status, no class was exempt—not even the patricians. Apart from a certain squeeze that the Panic of 1893 had put upon the older families, over a period of years their economic primacy was being successfully challenged by the industrial capitalists. In Washington Square of Edith Wharton's description, stronghold of New York's Knickerbocker aristocracy, fortunes inherited from ancestors in shipping, banking, and realty were dwarfed by those of the new men—the Spraggs, the Wellington Brys, the Bryces, and Sim Rosedale, who had many times the wealth of the Penistons, the Seldens, and the Van der Luydens. The plight of many of these older families was not unlike that of the Seldens as related by Mrs. Wharton: "Neither one of the couple cared for money, but their disdain of it took the form of always spending a little more than was prudent. If their house was shabby, it was exquisitely kept; if there were good books on the shelves there were also good dishes on the table. Selden senior had an eye for a picture, his wife had an understanding of old lace; and both were so conscious

of restraint and discrimination in buying that they never quite knew how it was that the bills mounted up."

Like the fictional Lily Bart in Mrs. Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, Edith Carow, whose grandfather was the New York merchant Isaac Carow, contemplated a marriage for money. She was brought to this by a depleted family fortune induced by her father Charles Carow's fondness for tippling. There was a happier ending in store for Edith than there was for Lily, whose rendezvous, in the end, was not with a husband but with an overdose of sleeping pills. For Edith it came to pass that Anna Lee Roosevelt died in childbirth and she became the second wife of Theodore Roosevelt.

With no class insulated against the changes that were taking place, there began a turning back to the past, for that alone seemed secure. Ancestry and history were the means whereby patrician and nonpatrician attempted to strike roots in the American soil. The nameless and faceless, the motley and recently arrived proletariats of factory, mill, and mine, because of sheer ignorance and the exigencies of the struggle for existence, were removed from the problem. But the middle and upper classes, with time and money on their hands, could afford to concern themselves with the niceties of status and belonging. It was this group that filled the ranks of the various hereditary organizations and ethnic historical societies that came into existence at this time.

To be eligible for membership in the hereditary societies—such as the Sons of the Revolution, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Society of Colonial Wars, the Order of Founders and Patriots, and other organizations of Sons, Daughters, and Dames—it was generally necessary to trace descent directly from an antecedent who had been present or shared in the trials of the early Republic. These organizations tended to be small and exclusive.

Less prominent people, and more of them, were eligible for membership in ethnic historical societies. The purpose

of such groups as the Scotch-Irish Society founded in 1889, the Pennsylvania-German Society founded in 1891, the American Jewish Historical Society founded in 1894, and the American Irish Historical Society founded in 1898 was, by and large, to demonstrate what the strain had accomplished in America and to demonstrate its fitness to stand alongside the English element in the soil of American nationality. In these groups, ethnic origin rather than family was the badge of belonging, and one could join without being a direct descendant of an ancestor who shared in the making of the country's prenatal and early national history. Belonging to a particular ethnic group, paying organizational dues, and attending an annual meeting entitled one to bask at least in the reflected glory of what someone else's ancestor had achieved.

Ancestry and ethnic origin were not only badges of belonging, but licenses to serve as custodian of the past. From copious Clio the old stocks wanted affirmation of their status; the more recent arrivals were interested in recognition for ethnic achievement in an American tradition which, they believed, had been too long monopolized by the older immigration. The procedure was the same for both groups; to probe the past for ethnic ancestors. This was done rather calmly and with a certain amount of dignity, not without overtones of snobbism, by hereditary and ancestral societies representing stocks with a plentitude of ancestors who were involved in the early history of the Republic. Later immigrant groups, with a smaller inventory of ancestors to draw upon, were rather frenetic about the process. It is not unusual to come upon references in the *Journal of the American Irish Historical Society* to "humbug" Scotch-Irish historians who allegedly select "any or all Irishmen who have attained eminence in public life, lump them together and label the lump 'Scotch-Irish.'"

What passed for history in the proceedings of various ethnic historical societies was, for the most part, execrable jingoism. Some groups, like the Scandinavians, laid the foundation for something better. But the movement is more

significant as revealing means and instrumentalities for the achievement of status in the United States and as an exercise in the purposeful use of history than as a contribution to historiography. Through the medium of the ethnic historical society, a psychological transmutation occurred among the membership whereby the achievements of one man's grandfather became the heritage of another man; the Americanism of all Irishmen and Jews was enhanced because of the handful of Irishmen and Jews who may have stood by Washington in a moment of crisis.

But the adoptive process did not end at this point. The Jews and Irish who joined these societies were not so much interested in the Levy who may have given Washington the coin that he threw across the Potomac or the McCarthy who may have supplied Washington with the hatchet with which he cut down the cherry tree. It was Washington and the tradition he represented that they wanted to grasp and the ethnic ancestor was only a means to identification with the broad stream of American history. The purpose of the ethnic historical society was not to carve out a separate ethnic heritage, but to utilize ethnic ancestors as a means of entering into the broad pattern of American development.

History also served the patricians, if not to establish belonging, then to affirm it. The appeal to history was implicit in the motifs and programs of the various hereditary and patriotic societies. In addition, the patrician class, unlike the ethnic groups, produced remarkably able historians. In their narratives, family history mingled with national history; family values with national values. The patrician historians were not invariably at ease in encounters with their ancestors in the pages of history. The reason for a certain amount of their discomfort was advanced by Henry Cabot Lodge at the bier of Charles Francis Adams, Jr., who died in 1915: "The famous ancestor, still more immediate ancestors of the highest distinction in successive generations," said Lodge, "bring

to their descendants with an unrelenting insistence, from which the average man is free, Carlyle's question, 'What then have you done?'"

The family with the outstanding proprietary interest in American history was, of course, the Adams family. Shortly after the publication of Henry Adams's monumental *History of the United States during the Jefferson and Madison Administrations*, Abram S. Hewitt congratulated the author for his success, "whether conscious or unconscious, I know not, in having redressed the grievances of the Adams Family." While this was to some extent true, Hewitt missed the tone of the history, which was not a study of heroes and villains, as were the forest epics of the mid-nineteenth century patrician historians. Instead, inspired by Comte, Darwin, and Spencer and not by Sir Walter Scott as William H. Prescott and Francis Parkman had been, Adams sought law rather than romance in history—that central stream which carried both good and bad "without much regard for themselves." If this was thesis in Adams's narrative, the antithesis was the historian's belief in the directive power of "a very few real people."

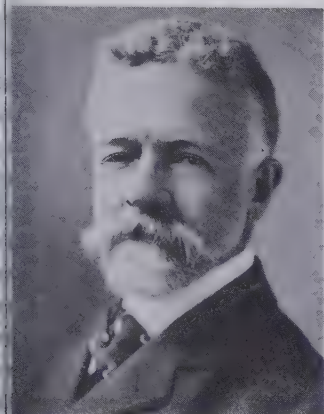
Who were these real people and where did they come from? Adams never answers this question; in fact, he never really posed it. Instead, there are only suggestions of answers in various parts of the *History*. Certainly, George Washington was one of the elite and Adams had transcendent admiration for him. In the course of his novel, *Democracy*, Adams takes the characters on a pilgrimage to Mount Vernon. "Why is it," asks one of them, "that everything Washington touched he purified even down to the associations of his house? Why do I feel unclean when I look at Mount Vernon?" And another adds: "We idolize him. To us he is Morality, Justice, Duty, Truth; half a dozen Roman Gods with capital letters."

In the making of an elite, environment and social matrix are credited by Adams with an unassessed role. Thus, the Virginia society that produced George Washington turned out "a crowd of other men like him." Among them was

Thomas Jefferson, who is sympathetically portrayed in Adams's *History*, despite the author's dislike of that element in Jefferson's thinking which reflected "pure Virginia prejudice or fantastic or half-developed thought which he took for philosophy." As one gentleman to another Adams understands Jefferson's discomfort before the multitude: "The rawness of political life was an incessant torture to him, and personal attacks made him keenly unhappy. His true delight was an intellectual life of science and art . . . his writings often betrayed subtle feeling for artistic form—a sure mark of intellectual sensuousness. He shrank from whatever was rough or coarse, and his yearning for sympathy was almost feminine." So Adams might well have written of himself.

There is too much the *parvenu*, too much the *arriviste* about Hamilton for Adams to admit him to the circle of gentlemen and real people. There was, in addition, the rankling memory of Hamilton's quarrel with John Adams. He felt differently toward Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin. The Swiss city of Geneva, where Gallatin was born, reminded Adams of Quincy. Both were birthplaces of natural aristocrats, so dear to the hearts of Jefferson and John Adams: "All the honors and dignities which the republic could give were bestowed upon the Gallatin family [one can almost read Adams] with a prodigal hand; but its members had no hereditary title other than the quaint preface of Noble."

"The real people" were not, according to Adams, "wise and virtuous," the "best people," and "fashionable society." Adams pointed out that those popularly estimated as being "well-born, well-educated, and well-bred" had fostered the Essex Junto and the Burr conspiracy. Consequently he concluded that "the moral instinct had little to do with social distinction." But if the "real people" were neither "wise," "best," "fashionable," "well-born," nor "well-educated"—then who were they? The answer provided by Adams is that they somehow and unaccountably *were*; that by their deeds one knew them; and that as time went on they were fewer and fewer. The decline of the real people



Henry Cabot Lodge (1850–1924) in 1908. (*Bettmann Archive.*)



Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (1835–1915). (*Bettmann Archive.*)

Henry Adams (1838–1918) at his summer home. (*Massachusetts Historical Society.*)



Brooks Adams (1848–1927) as an undergraduate at Harvard. (*Bettmann Archive.*)



was not unrelated to the process of degeneration which Adams found to be inherent in history.

Adams noted in his biography of Randolph that the Virginia society that had produced Washington and Jefferson was no more; its successor form was capable of yielding only a John Randolph, who was, at best, the "type of political charlatan who had something in him." In the post-Civil War era Adams evaluated Ulysses S. Grant and his administration as symptomatic of devolution rather than evolution.

From what high point in history did devolution begin? In the summer of 1895, in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Cabot Lodge, Adams visited Normandy where, coming into contact with the survivals of Norman civilization, he experienced a "new sense of history." Actually the visit to Normandy merely strengthened and deepened Adams's conviction as to the superiority of Norman over Anglo-Saxon civilization, a belief that he had advanced almost a quarter of a century earlier in the pages of the *North American Review*. Now he could only speculate on the deterioration of society and its elite from the time when the Norman warriors, artists, poets, and cathedral builders were the makers of the medieval synthesis and had built Chartres as their crowning achievement. "Our ancestors," he wrote, "have steadily declined and run down until we have reached pretty near the bottom. They have played their little part according to the schedule. They have lost their religion, their art and their military tastes. They can not now comprehend the meaning of what they did at Mont St. Michel. They have kept only the qualities which were most useful, with a dull instinct recalling dead associations. So we get Boston."

Relatively late in life, eight or ten years before his death in 1918, Adams endeavored to ground his theory of elite degeneration upon the second law of thermodynamics promulgated by Lord Kelvin in the middle of the nineteenth century. Kelvin maintained that the universe was progressively losing energy, and, in the not too distant future, would become a waste place. Adams went along

with this theory, arguing that since thought was a form of energy, man's potential for creativity was declining along with other universal forces. The residue of energy in the late nineteenth century, according to Adams, was insufficient to sustain the artistic and imaginative types that had fashioned the twelfth-century synthesis and which had placed the Virgin on her Heavenly throne. In his own degenerate day, dominated by economic man, the banker and the Jew had succeeded to the elite roles of Adams's Norman ancestors and had dethroned the Virgin. In a society dominated by material values, the Adamases, according to Henry and his brother Brooks, could play no role. Henry nodded agreement when his brother Brooks told him in 1897: "It is not full four generations since John Adams wrote the constitution of Massachusetts. It is time that we perished. The world is tired of us."

The reaction of Brooks and Henry Adams to ancestral achievement was not necessarily the inevitable patrician response. Awareness by the patricians of their ancestors did not mean that they were invariably overwhelmed by them. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., older brother of Brooks and Henry, displayed another attitude in his *Autobiography*: "I have, perhaps, accomplished nothing considerable compared with what my three immediate ancestors accomplished but, on the other hand, I have done some things better than they ever did; and, what is more and most of all, I have had a better time in life—got more enjoyment out of it. In this respect, I would not change with any of them."

Unlike his brother, Henry, Charles Francis entered the ranks of the new post-Civil War elites of businessmen and bureaucrats. He was chairman of the board of the Union Pacific Railroad and a member of the Massachusetts State Railway Commission. Although he brought a patrician sense of responsibility to these tasks, he found them not to his liking and, in the end, grew to dislike bureaucrats and despise businessmen. However, he had at least been willing to test the new patterns of American life and his was a less tragic view of the passing of the old ways and what were

once the real people. In writing the history of Quincy, of the Adams "race-place" that is "flesh of the Adams flesh," he regrets the changes that have taken place: that immigrants have taken over from the native stock; that an urban proletariat has replaced the farmers; that the township has yielded to an incorporated municipality. But he was well aware that history could not be reversed and that there was no turning back. Adams would have "the ancient system—so endeared . . . by custom and time—laid away as a parent that was gone—silently, tenderly, reverently."

Nor did he give up hope for the nation because New England was no longer what it once was. Instead, he believed that the mission of the Republic and the idea of its founders, having obsolesced in New England, found resting place in the agricultural communities of the Northwest "where great aggregations of civic populace are few and the principles of natural selection have the fullest and freest plan in the formation of the race. . . . In their hands . . . will rest the ark of our covenant."

Still another pattern of patrician response to ancestor and tradition is offered by Theodore Roosevelt, who explained in his *Autobiography* that he went into politics not because of family mandate but for the purpose of "getting for myself a privilege to which I was entitled in common with other people." Indeed, class and tradition are presented by Roosevelt as barriers to his political career even as Edith Wharton saw them as hindering her early literary efforts. Roosevelt recalled that he knew best "the men in the clubs of social pretension and the men of cultivated taste and easy life." In their estimation, "politics was 'low' . . . the organizations were not controlled by 'gentlemen.'" But gentlemen, Roosevelt noted, did not belong to the governing class, and Roosevelt "intended to be one of the governing class."

Roosevelt is inclined to diminish his ancestors' accomplishments. "During the Revolution," he states in his *Autobiography*, "some of my forebears North, and South served repeatedly but without distinction, in the army, and others rendered similar service in the Continental Congress."

in various local legislatures." Salted into Theodore Roosevelt's historical works are occasional references to ancestors who are presented, in a modest way, as being on the right side of things. A student of Roosevelt genealogy, Howard K. Beale, has noted Roosevelt's tendency, if not to belittle his forebears, then to make them out for less than what they really were and to minimize the size of the family fortune that was bequeathed him.

This was part of Roosevelt's effort to be on a level of mail-fellow-well-met with politicians and people. It would also reinforce, what is by now the stock biographical portrait of Theodore Roosevelt as prone to overcompensate for feelings of inferiority. He was evidently impelled to reduce the advantage given him by ancestry so that he might emerge the greater man in the American tradition of struggle and triumph over odds. For Roosevelt, the essence of life was struggle and without the element of struggle life would hardly be worth living—even if it was necessary to increase, artificially, the odds that confronted him.

It is also possible that Roosevelt's playing down of his "merchant and planter" antecedents, may be attributed to his dislike of the "bourgeois type" to which so many of them conformed. "An individual in the bourgeois state of development," wrote Roosevelt, "while honest, industrious, and virtuous, is also not unapt to be a miracle of short-sighted selfishness. . . . The timid good form a most useful as well as a most despicable part of the community."

While many generations of Roosevelt's ancestors lived in New York, we find lacking in him the kind of pride in "race-place" that entered into Charles Francis Adams, Jr.'s account of Quincy and Henry Cabot Lodge's narrative of Boston. Not only was the patriotic spirit of the city difficult to arouse, but the metropolis was too diversified for his liking. "The commercial and business world, the world of Wall Street, of the banks, of the big mercantile houses, and of the clubs, has absolutely no touch with the world of the East Side," he wrote to Anna Cowles in 1902, "just exactly as the little knots of idealistic reformers who mean well

but do not know, have no kind of touch with the great and rather sordid political machines of the city, which effectively do know and often do not mean well at all." Roosevelt wrote a matter-of-fact history of New York, into which personal and ancestral pride in the city rarely entered. Indeed, reading Roosevelt on New York one is conscious of Henry Adams's dislike of the place as a "sink of race" and Henry James's disdain of the city.

In explaining his own roots, Roosevelt reached beyond immediate ancestry and birthplace to a primitive yet contemporary conquering race, the natural habitat of which was the forests of Europe and America. Roosevelt denied that this race, which had invaded England in the sixteenth century, and, ten centuries later, had begun the conquest of the United States was, as so many historians contend, Anglo-Saxon. Rather was it a "fused race" constituted, he must have been relieved to state, of those stocks of Northern and Western Europe which entered into his own ethnic composition. Roosevelt wrote in *The Winning of the West* that this "fused race" in "obedience to its instincts—instincts that Roosevelt believed he shared—provided the impetus for the conquest of the trans-Allegheny region even as it did the earlier conquest of the eastern seaboard of the United States and the invasion of England.

Roosevelt, like certain earlier patrician historians, believed that in the wilderness, elite-making and leadership-shaping qualities were forged. In the West, the fused race produced an "archetype of freedom" and "vigorous manliness for the lack of which in a nation, as in an individual, the possession of no other qualities can possibly atone." The primeval West was a proving ground for the gentleman who tested his capacity to endure and his skill with the instruments of survival, such as the horse and the rifle, even as the medieval knight tested both himself and his weapons on the tournament field. Reading Roosevelt on the West, one is reminded of Francis Parkman's comment about La Salle: the gentleman born, "trained in arts and letters" had better qualifications for leadership and could "stand hardships better than anybody else."

Roosevelt's Western experience undoubtedly contributed to his emancipation from what he regarded as the sterile qualities of the gentleman who belonged to the exclusive clubs of Eastern cities. The long days in the saddle; the plain grizzly bears, elk, and deer; the encounters with all types of men spawned by the frontier; the image of a man in motion, struggling, surviving, and thoroughly enjoying himself against the background of the forest, lent glamour to the revolt. The patrician sense of *arcana imperia* and the lure of the wide-open spaces was to prove an excellent combination at the polls.

Henry Cabot Lodge did not share Roosevelt's sense of emancipation from ancestry. Lodge, as Henry Adams pointed out, inevitably harked back to race and ancestry. While Lodge was teaching at Harvard, a student, Edward Channing, had referred to Francis Higginson, first minister of Salem, as a hypocrite. Lodge was taken aback.

"Mr. Channing," asked Lodge. "Do you know that Mr. Higginson was your ancestor?"

"Yes, sir," replied Channing.

"Do you think it well to speak thus of your ancestor?"

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, American historians of middle-class origin were explaining the greatness of the American people and of American institutions in terms of derivation from Anglo-Saxon sources. Lodge, however, preferred the Normans to the Anglo-Saxons. The Normans Lodge described as "the most remarkable of all people who poured out of the Germanic forests. . . . To them we owe the marvels of Gothic architecture, for it was they who were the great builders and architects of mediæval Europe. . . . They were great statesmen and great generals, and they had only been in Normandy about a hundred years when they crossed the English channel, conquered the country, and gave England for many generations to come her kings and nobles." The esteem in which Lodge held the Normans harked back to an earlier tradition in English historiography, to the writings of Ruskin and Carlyle, who considered the Normans

superior to the Saxons they had conquered in 1066. A later generation of English historians, headed by Edward Augustus Freeman, reversed this doctrine and exalted the Anglo-Saxon over the Norman—claiming that it was the Anglo-Saxon freeman who maintained the traditional Germanic democratic institutions despite the imposition of feudal hierarchy by the conquering Normans. Most American historians went along with Freeman's ideas—that is, with the exception of Lodge and Henry Adams. The latter avowed his preference for Norman culture to that of the "stupid and beer-swilling Saxon boors." Indeed, Adams found it difficult to be enthusiastic over "the English of the eleventh century, probably the only pure German race which was ever conquered twice in half a century and held permanently in subjection by races inferior to itself in wealth and power."

It is interesting to note in passing that the preference of the patrician historians, Lodge and Adams, for the Normans over the Anglo-Saxons, had a parallel in the romanticists of the Old South who viewed themselves as the descendants of Norman knights out of the pages of Ivanhoe, pitted against Yankee shopkeeper adversaries who were of inferior Anglo-Saxon stock.

Lodge traced his descent from the Normans through the ancestor he most revered, the Federalist George Cabot, who was his grandfather and whose *Life and Letters* Lodge published in 1878. Lodge's feeling of having been set apart by virtue of his descent was amplified by reading Galton, Darwin, and Mendel. Their writings, he was convinced, established a hereditary basis for aristocracy—that a man's origin became a recognized part of his biographer's task." Race and ancestry were, to Lodge, bulwarks against "the waves of democracy" which tended to submerge "the old and narrow lines within which the family was set apart." They were, too, a built-in stabilizer of the social order and a guarantor of the *status quo* against the disruptive influences spawned by the *fin de siècle*.

History, insofar as it reflected racial experience, represented to Lodge an "indestructible, unconscious inheritance."

nce upon which argument has no effect." This inheritance as a guide to "our short-lived generation" as it was to the race itself across the centuries." Ancestor George Cabot in a letter to Timothy Pickering had proclaimed democracy in its natural operation to be *the government of the worst. . . .*" This dislike of direct democracy was echoed more than a century later from the floor of the United States Senate when Lodge denounced the initiative, referendum, and recall as contrary to the innately conservative experience of "the English race." Lodge told the Senate: "More precious even than forms of government are the mental and moral qualities which make what we call our race." Since "socialism in the United States was not so much a war of classes as it was a conflict of races," Lodge favored exclusion from the United States of those races which had what he considered to be a hereditary taint of socialism.

In searching the past for ethnic identification and the lost world of their ancestors, the patricians also sought political ground upon which to stand. The biographies of Washington, Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris, Thomas Hart Benton, and Charles Francis Adams that Henry Cabot Lodge, Theodore Roosevelt, and Charles Francis Adams, Jr., contributed to the American Statesman Series amounted to a lengthy statement, and, for the most part, defense of the Federalist-Whig-Republican tradition. With their own careers in mind, Roosevelt and Lodge addressed themselves to the problem of why the Federalist Party, with four fifths of the talent, good sense, and ability of the time, went down to defeat, ignominy, and ultimately to extinction. History, anachronistically, with no lessons to teach, never had more apt pupils than these two patrician politicians.

Clio's reply was interpreted in terms of the sorry effects of a brilliant but divided leadership; loss of contact with the masses, resulting from "the dogmatic character of the Federalist leaders, and the ignorance of popular nature"; the superior political leadership and organizational traits

of the Jeffersonians. The ruins of Federalism yielded certain do's and don'ts of political careerism. First and foremost, the patrician must seek office rather than the other way around. The patrician must maintain party unity at all costs (Lodge's support of Blaine in 1884 was followed by his branding as "absolutely indefensible"; Webster's failure to support Scott in 1852); not lose contact with the mass of the people; and not allow education, background, and breeding—in effect the gentlemanly tradition—to elevate him above utilizing the machinery of politics. To avoid the failure of the Federalists, it was necessary to unite the high intellectual caliber of the Federalist-Whig Republican tradition with the Jeffersonian flair for political maneuvering and talent for pleasing people. On their ability to do this rested, they believed, both the fate of the Republic and the progress of their own political careers within the framework of the party of Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Webster, Charles Francis Adams, and Abraham Lincoln. "By inheritance and education," wrote Theodore Roosevelt, "I feel I belong with the Republican Party."

History revealed, to those who were looking for revelations, not only lessons in political tactics, but the wisdom of certain policies and the rectitude of certain principles. Ever before the patricians was the example of George Washington: the strength and dignity of his executive leadership; the high caliber of his appointments to federal office; the firmness with which he conducted the foreign affairs of the new nation; his no-nonsense attitude toward the Whiskey Rebellion; the impetus he gave certain forms and procedures, the effect of which was not to stifle liberty but to encourage its growth within a pattern of authority. Finally, there was the legacy of the separation of powers in maintaining freedom and of the balance of power in foreign affairs in maintaining independence; of a strong central government and the effective use of governmental machinery to promote broad social ends.

Undoubtedly, there was a tendency on the part of the patricians toward making private their heritage—to stamp it with the mark of family and race. There were limitations

owever, to which the heritage lent itself to such treatment. The patrician historians, while agreed on certain points in the interpretation of their common past, disagreed on other essentials. Roosevelt and Lodge were adamant in their anti-Jeffersonianism and in their support of a strong central government, whereas Henry Adams was sympathetic toward Jeffersonian liberalism, states rights, and decentralization as likely to foster individual liberty. Roosevelt and Lodge admired Hamilton for his administrative abilities and his policies, but there were limits to his admiration. Even the aristocratic Lodge dissented from Hamilton's belief that the Constitution was unequal to the burden imposed upon it, that the foundations of democracy were at any moment threatened by a general upheaval. Lodge deplored Hamilton's plan to stand at the head of an army as "a leader ready to play the part of a saviour of society, and establish the government on strong and enduring foundations." It is Lodge's verdict that Hamilton "was utterly at fault in supposing that there were in the United States the same elements and the same forces as in France. Both race and history made their existence impossible. The representative democracy developing in America was more hostile to the anarchy of the French Revolution than the strongest and most energetic government which the wit of man could devise." Certainly, the man on horseback was not a legitimate feature of the tradition of aristocracy and patricianism in America.

The heritage, moreover, had ceased to be narrowly partisan as early as 1801 when, as Theodore Roosevelt pointed out, Jefferson avoided wrecking the country by adopting the Federalist program. In addition, the law that Henry Adams sought in history and that, theoretically at least, could have become part of a hard-and-fast patrician tradition, was forever being compromised by exceptions. In the end, Adams presents the paradox of the union saved by two men who owed different political allegiances—John Quincy Adams and Albert Gallatin.

The battering ram of democracy also helped breach the exclusive walls of this heritage. Pressure was exerted from

within as well as from without as patricians, eager for careers, were faced with the problem of making their heritage meaningful to a heterogeneous electorate that controlled their political destinies. Consequently, instead of the aristocratic potential of their heritage being developed it had to be diluted by practical and ambitious men who were bent upon making it more appealing to the average voter. We glimpse Lodge, in the pages of Henry Adams' *Education*, "English to the last fibre of his thought," trying to reconcile the various New England standards with each other: the Congregational clergy, Harvard College and the foreign element—shifting "sometimes with painful strain of temper, from one sensitive muscle to another. . . ."

Immigrant and ethnic groups in the American population, for their part, accepted the heritage thus presented provided that their share in the making of it was recognized. With the distinction between Federalism and Republicanism, ethnic historians were not concerned. In fact politics and social issues interested them very little except for a tendency among custodians of the Irish and Jewish past to bewail those of their brethren who enlisted in racial causes and brought discredit to the group. All that they seemed to want was to share the historical sun with some of the greats out of the American past. Had the leadership of the various ethnic historical societies remained in Europe, they might have been in the forefront of those demanding minority rights and ethnic self-determination. In America, this kind of separatism broke down even as it did for the patricians. The tugs of democracy toward participation in a common heritage were too strong to be resisted, and, in the long run, pulled both groups together. This would explain why for so long, the immigrants proved an acquiescent background for rule by the old families; why they voted for Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt, and, in our own day, for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson.

The Spirit Wrestlers:

An Account of the Doukhobors

George Woodcock

Almost every year for the past half century the newspapers of Western Canada have broken out in sensational reports about the activities of a small group of Russian immigrants (about 15,000 at the last estimate) who call themselves Doukhobors, or Wrestlers of the Spirit. Doukhobors in general are theocratic millenarians, convinced of the moral and spiritual degeneration of the modern world, but most of them hold their views passively; it is the acts of person and public nudity performed by a relatively small minority, calling themselves the Sons of Freedom, that have caused most of the shocked, angry, and secretly intrigued attention that has centered around the Doukhobors almost continually since their arrival in Canada sixty years ago.

Some of the Doukhobors cultivate farms in the prairie wheatlands of Saskatchewan and Alberta, but most of them—and certainly the more devout—live in the mountains of British Columbia. The radical Sons of Freedom—who number about 2,500—inhabit small hamlets of bleak wooden huts which they have built as squatters on isolated stretches of Crown land. The less extreme Orthodox

Doukhobors live in the neglected orchard lands of the Kootenay and Kettle valleys, where in the past they were organized in a great self-sufficient community. Now they are almost all individual smallholders, following seasonal occupations such as constructional carpentry, logging, and fruit-picking; few migrate to the cities.

In recent years I have paid several visits to villages inhabited by both Orthodox Doukhobors and Sons of Freedom. My experiences were for the most part unsensational. Nobody stripped in my honor, as admiring Daughters of Freedom attempted to do for the late Mackenzie King; no house burned in my presence to the tune of ecstatic psalmody. But I found myself in a world where hospitality—willing and unstinted—was a religious obligation, and where men and women lived in a twilight of visions and prophecies, always in expectation of apocalyptic happenings.

The stories of Doukhobor origins which I would hear at the priestless religious meetings or over Gargantuan vegetarian meals were magnificently touched with that contempt for consistency and probability which characterizes all the thinking of the Spirit Wrestlers. One white-bearded Son of Freedom told me that the Doukhobors were the direct descendents of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—the Biblical heroes of the furnace who, according to the account, would be the first Doukhobors to dabble in fire. A young Orthodox Doukhobor put forward a theory that the first of the sect was a Russian Grand Duke who had abandoned his rank and his fortune after encountering the Quakers on his travels abroad. A minor prophet who led a small heretical sub-sect and claimed to be the incarnation of Michael the Archangel said that Doukhoborism was born in the sixteenth century, while one of his disciples repeated the Quaker theme by talking about a Friend who, late in the seventeenth century, had been taken to Russia as a prisoner and had become the earliest Doukhobor prophet.

When I turned from these oral legends, which serve the Doukhobors themselves instead of a written history,

found that the reliable non-Doukhobor sources show the sect beginning to draw attention during the reign of the Czarina Anna Ivanovna (1730-40). There are records in that reign of settlements of Spirit Wrestlers in the provinces of Tambov and Ekaterinoslav. Already the Doukhobors had formed their characteristic attitudes; they claimed that guidance could come only from the God Within, and hence no man should accept ecclesiastical authority. The resemblance between this viewpoint and that of the early Quakers is certainly close, but there is no further evidence to suggest that it is more than a case of parallel evolution of belief.

How long the Doukhobors were active before 1730 is a matter of speculation, but their origin has been traced plausibly to the Great Schism, when the Orthodox Church divided over such liturgical minutiae as whether two or three fingers should be used in the act of blessing. The original schism was followed by a proliferation of dissenting cults which went far beyond mere liturgical differences. The members of one group, when hunted by the authorities, would lock themselves in their meeting-houses and set them on fire, dying in the conviction that the flames of martyrdom would bear their souls directly to Heaven. The enduring preoccupation of the Doukhobors with fire suggests that they may have descended from the survivors of these pious arsonists.

When they first emerge into history the Doukhobors appear as a peaceful, unsensational sect, living under a holy leader named Sylvan Kolesnikoff. Kolesnikoff died in 1775, and he was succeeded by a former wool-dealer, Ilarion Pobirohin, the founder of radical Doukhoborism. Pobirohin was the first leader to persuade his followers to accept him as a living Christ; he also laid down the doctrine of religious communism which Doukhobors have held—at least nominally—ever since, and he is credited with having initiated the Living Book, a collection of psalms and hymns by which Doukhobor history and beliefs are transmitted orally. This corpus of sung traditions is still

growing, even today, as new events in the life of the sect are celebrated, and it represents the nearest approach to a Doukhobor literature.

Pobirohin's rule coincided with a renewal of persecution by the Czarist authorities, and there seems little doubt that the attempts at this time to destroy the sect by exile and press-gang were due largely to the militant character that his influence conferred on Doukhobor resistance to temporal power. He himself was sent to Siberia in 1790.

Under Alexander I the persecutions were relaxed, and the Doukhobors were encouraged to form a pioneer colony in the rich Milky Waters region near the Black Sea, where they flourished under the leadership of an ex-soldier named Saleri Kapustin. By 1816 their colony consisted of nine villages, with four thousand inhabitants, and at that time they were visited by their first historian, a young scholar named Orest Novitski who, despite his own Orthodox leanings, found much to praise in their life. "On the credit of the Doukhobors one must say that they are sober, laborious, and frugal," he remarked; "that in their houses and clothing they are careful to be clean and tidy, that they are attentive to their agriculture and cattle-breeding, occupations which have been and still are their chief employment."

In the Milky Waters settlements Kapustin established a tight theocratic hierarchy, with twelve apostles and thirty elders ruling under him. After his death round about 1820 (the date is uncertain, since Kapustin is said to have faked his own funeral in 1817 to avoid arrest and to have lived long afterwards hidden in a cave), the elders became a ruling oligarchy under whom the sect entered the darkest period of its internal life. Deviant opinions were suppressed rigorously, and rumors began to spread among the neighboring Mennonites of a murderous religious terrorism among the Doukhobors. Eventually Nicholas I ordered an inquiry, and the investigators unearthed more than a score of mutilated and decapitated corpses.

In punishment the whole sect was expelled to the V



Peter Verigin the Lordly. (*Provincial Archives, Victoria, B.C.*)

Mountains of the Caucasus. Only those who accepted the Orthodox faith were allowed to remain in the fertile lands beside the Black Sea, and there were very few of them. The authorities hoped that in the Caucasus the Doukhobors would find life demoralizingly harsh, and that the proximity of the fierce Moslem tribesmen would cure them of the pacifism which, during the Turkish War of 1806–12, had made Doukhobor conscripts throw away their muskets on going into battle.

But the exiles adapted themselves so well to the Caucasus and impressed the Moslems so much by their pacifist tactics, that the years in the Wet Mountains were probably the most prosperous in Doukhobor history, thanks largely to Lukeria Kalmikova, the only woman leader of the sect, who began to rule in 1864. Lukeria was a capable and vividly handsome woman who gained the friendship of the Grand Duke Michael, then the governor of the Caucasus, and used it to protect her followers from interference. She was more diplomatic than fanatical; since the Wet Mountains colony was technically a penal settlement, the men were not conscripted at this time, but Lukeria did not scruple to fill the communal treasury and gain

favor with the Grand Duke by providing transport and food for the Russian army in the war of 1877.

When Lukeria died in 1886 the sect was split irremediably over the succession to the leadership. The devout majority supported a young peasant, Peter Verigin, whom Lukeria had taken under her protection, and whom she had named leader on her deathbed. But Lukeria's brother, Michael Hubanoff, set himself up as Verigin's rival and even gained the support of the Governor by telling him that Verigin intended to pose as "Christ, Prophet, and Czar." This recourse to earthly authority antagonized most of the Doukhobors and helped to establish the moral supremacy of Peter the Lordly, as Verigin's supporters began to call him.

Justifiably, as events were to prove, the authorities feared a revival of Doukhobor militancy if Verigin were allowed to establish his authority. Accordingly, in 1887, he was exiled to Shenkursk, near the White Sea, and later, in 1894, to a remote village in Northern Siberia. In these places he mixed with political exiles and read the books they lent him. Tolstoy's pamphlets, advocating pacifism and asceticism, appealed particularly to him, and his messages to the faithful, which he smuggled out from his distant points of exile with a circumspect efficiency that baffled the secret police, were soon filled with unacknowledged quotations from this author. Eventually he wrote to Tolstoy, and the old novelist, ignorant of the existence of leadership among the Doukhobors, concluded enthusiastically that he had found at last a group of peasants who were actually practicing successfully the anarchist-pacifist behavior in which his own followers had failed so signally.

In 1892 Verigin began to implement his plans for a Doukhobor revival by ordering from Shenkursk a series of reforms in Doukhobor life which were intended to create an atmosphere of moral discipline. Debts were canceled and a redistribution of material wealth was decreed as the beginning of a return to Pobirohin's communism. Prohibitions against alcohol, tobacco, and meat-eating, which had lapsed under the easygoing Lukeria, were re-

stored, and, as a spiritual preparation for persecutions ahead, sexual abstinence was enjoined.*

Finally came the symbolic act that initiated a deliberate defiance of the Czarist government. On the accession of Alexander III in 1883 conscription had been reimposed on the Doukhobors. Lukeria Kalmikova, conscious of her declining vitality, had accepted the situation, but Verigin prepared to initiate a resistance. On June 29, 1895, his followers in the Caucasus gathered with psalm and hymn outside their villages, and burned in ceremonial pyres every lethal weapon they possessed, at the same time declaring their complete renunciation of violence. As the flames leapt high in the rocky valleys, Cossack troopers arrived and flogged the chanting sectarians. Several men died under the knout, but the passive resistance continued, and a new exile was ordered. Thousands of Verigin's followers tramped in weary columns from the high valleys down to the malaria-ridden swamps near Batum. It was a deliberate attempt to enforce submission or extermination, for the Doukhobors were forbidden to buy or rent land from the Georgians, and work for wages was almost impossible to obtain. Many died of sickness or starvation, but their sufferings only increased the resolution of the survivors.

The Russian government hoped to carry out its persecution in silence, but thanks to Tolstoy the attempt to impose a press censorship on the Doukhobor issue was rendered ineffective. Prince Hilkov, a pacifist exiled in the Caucasus, sent him word of the events there, and Tolstoy in turn asked his disciple, Paul Birukov, to visit Batum. No Russian paper dared print the information Birukov collected, and Tolstoy sent it to the *London Times*, where it appeared in October 1895. It was followed by other reve-

*This kind of restriction recurs constantly among the Doukhobors. As late as 1949 my acquaintance, Michael the Archangel Verigin, ordered it in his village on Vancouver Island as a preparation for establishing a nonmarital religious communism, and one young woman I met there was under sentence of partial ostracism for a long period because she disobeyed by becoming pregnant.

lations, and eventually the weight of international disapproval forced the Czarist authorities to abandon their efforts to destroy completely the Doukhobor sect. In February 1898 a decree was issued permitting the sect to leave Russia. The English Quakers collected funds, and Tolstoy sold the copyright of *Resurrection* to help finance the emigration.

The British government had offered an asylum in Cyprus, and more than a thousand emigrants sailed there in August 1898, only to find the ground so barren and the Cypriots so unfriendly that there seemed little hope of founding a successful colony. Meanwhile Peter Kropotkin has returned to England from a tour of Canada, where he had visited Mennonite settlements in the prairies, and at his suggestion Aylmer Maude, Hilkov, and two Doukhobor delegates went there in September, a few weeks after the landing in Cyprus.

Their visit was successful. The Canadian authorities were eager to gain immigrants who had the reputation of being excellent farmers, and they offered a quarter section (160 acres) of prairie land to every male Doukhobor. The conditions of this offer were later to become a subject of bitter dispute between the Doukhobors and the Canadian government. To this day many members of the sect believe fervently a legend that Queen Victoria personally declared that the Doukhobors were to live in Canada for ninety-nine years free of all earthly laws. In fact, Victoria is not on record as expressing an opinion of any kind about the Doukhobors, and the evidence of Aylmer Maude, one of the original negotiators, contradicts entirely the strange suggestion that even a democratic government would sanction an island of theocratic autonomy in the midst of its territory. "The Canadian authorities," he said, "were quite explicit about the conditions on which the Doukhobors could come to Canada. They were to make entry for the homesteads individually, in the usual Canadian fashion. They would have to supply vital statistics, conform to the laws of the country, and pay their taxes." The only major concessions were that the Doukhobors might cultivate

their homesteads communally, and that they should be exempt from military service.

But the troubles that were to arise over the land grants still lay years ahead; in 1898 the negotiations were concluded with apparent smoothness, and the first shipload of Doukhobors left Russia in December 1898. The last contingent reached Canada in June 1899, and shortly afterwards they all traveled to the lands that had been allotted to them in Saskatchewan. In all, there were 7,417 settlers. Approximately 13,000 Doukhobors chose to stay in their own country where, since the Stalin purges, all trace has been lost of them.

When they reached the prairies, the immigrants followed the advice of Peter the Lordly, as they now called Verigin, and formed fifty small villages, grouped in three widely separated areas. But another recommendation of the leader was not so closely followed. Early in 1899, following his established policy of ruling from a distance, Verigin had written: "Your life in Canada should be on a communal basis; that is to say, absolute necessities like cattle, plows, and other implements, as well as granaries and storehouses, grist mills, oil presses, smithies, and woodworking shops—all these in the first years must be built by communal effort."

But, once removed from the unifying threat of persecution, not every Doukhobor wished to return to theocratic communism. Besides, there were great disparities in wealth. The members of some villages had brought enough money to buy livestock, but other villages were so poor that the men had to work as railway construction laborers while the women, in default of horses, hitched themselves in teams to the plows that broke the virgin prairie. The rich villages became individualistic, the poor villages communistic, and by 1900 more than 2,000 immigrants had abandoned communal methods, while only about 1,600 established complete sharing economies. The remainder, about half the total number, lived in various degrees of partial communism.

Divisions that had begun in property relationships were

soon aggravated by a religious frenzy that ran through the poorer villages. Interpreting letters from Tolstoy and Verigin in the extremest possible manner, a group of visionaries put forward a series of radical propositions. All animals are our brothers, they declared, and must not be exploited; piles of leather shoes were burned and hundreds of horses and cattle were set free in the woods. Metals are produced by men who work under inhumane conditions, they added; their followers threw away anything of iron or steel, from a nail to a needle. Finally, it was revealed that work itself was sinful, since Adam did not work in Eden. Far to the South, declared the prophets, lay an earthly paradise where it was warm all year round and everything a man might need grew freely on the trees. God intended that the Doukhobors should inherit this land, and now they had only to march away in the wake of the migrating birds.

These naive tales produced a ferment of anticipation in the various settlements, and in October 1902 four hundred pilgrims, rubber-shod and clad in garments without metal fastenings, set out from the northerly villages. In each hamlet others joined them, until a procession seventeen hundred strong straggled over the prairie, men, women and children, carrying their sick in litters of poplar poles browsing the autumn fruits and the stray ears of corn that had been left in the fields at harvest, and singing as they marched south towards the Promised Land. In Yorkton after the march had gone on for more than two hundred miles, the Northwest Mounted Police detached the women and children. The men headed obstinately in the direction of the Dakotas. On November 3, when they reached Minnedosa in Manitoba, the night temperatures had fallen below zero, and the Mounted Police intervened a second time. Resisting as much as they could without actual violence, the pilgrims were bundled into trains and sent home.

In this ignominious way the search for Eden came to an end, but the fanaticism it generated did not wholly disappear; out of it sprang the radical Sons of Freedom, whos

first demonstration took place in the spring of 1903. A group of fifty pilgrims gathered in the village of Efremovka and began to follow the trail of the earlier march; they were the first Doukhobor nudists.

"We went in the manner of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve," wrote their leader Alex Mahortoff, "to show humanity how man should go back to his fatherland and return to it the ripened fruit of its seeds. Night came on and the weather changed. It was very windy, with rain, and then snow came. Being naked, we all huddled together like cattle, men, women, and children, to keep warm. Next morning it was very strange and wonderful to us that, in spite of the wind and snow, none of us was frostbitten."

This time the pilgrims were unpopular. Shocked at first by their nudism and busy with spring plowing, the other Doukhobors drove them away from their villages and when, after several days, they approached Yorkton, a posse of male citizens intercepted them outside the town and dressed them forcibly so that the innocence of Canadian womenfolk might not be offended. They were sent to prison for indecent exposure, though no thought of indecency had entered their singularly puritanical minds.

Meanwhile, Peter Verigin had been freed from his Siberian exile, and the fifteen years of separation from his people came to an end when he reached Canada in December 1902. Exile had not blunted his ambition, and he immediately set about re-establishing his domination. In order to institutionalize his communistic ideas and to canalize the enthusiasm that was being diverted into visionary pilgrimages, he founded the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, which welded the settlements into a single body based on collective work and common ownership. In the first flush of pleasure at the return of their prophet, even the more individualistic Doukhobors gave temporary support to his plans, and, since Verigin was an imaginative organizer and set about a rapid mechanization of farming methods, the settlements began to prosper. A brief flurry of machine-wrecking by

the Sons of Freedom did not substantially halt their progress.

Already, in 1903, Verigin was able to set aside money for the purchase of land. In doing this he was looking ahead to the time when, to validate the grants of land which had been made to them as immigrants in 1899, the Doukhobors would be asked to take oaths of allegiance to the British King. This acknowledgment of a rival power he wished to avoid.

The land issue came to a head in 1907. By this time the pilgrimages and the Luddism of the extremists had made the Doukhobors seem to many Canadians less worthy of consideration than they had appeared on arrival; besides, prairie land was now in demand. Accordingly, the Doukhobors were brusquely given the alternative of complying with the letter of the law or losing their lands. A quarter of them, defying Verigin, complied. The rest were deprived of about ninety per cent of their holdings, and 100,000 acres of rich land, much of it broken, was turned over to Canadian farmers.

The Canadian authorities acted legally, and in accordance with the terms stated to Maude and the Doukhobor delegates in 1898. Whether they acted sensibly is less certain. The loss of the prairie lands created a resentment among the Doukhobors which still rankles, and it set a pattern of distrusting the government which has been at the root of most disputes between the sect and the authorities since 1907.

No sooner was this crisis past than Peter the Lordly began to turn his attention away from the prairies. In their scattered remnants of land the Doukhobors who remained faithful to him were subjected more than ever to the eroding influence of Canadian life, and he decided that the only way to preserve their loyalty was to find a region where they could form a relatively compact community. In 1909 he crossed the Rockies into British Columbia and took up options in the Kootenay and Kettle valleys.

The new settlements grew rapidly. By 1916 the Doukhobor holdings in British Columbia totaled 19,000 acres, inhabited by 5,000 people. Vineyards and orchards had been planted, and the rich valley bottoms were irrigated from great reservoirs in the hills. Verigin aimed at the highest possible self-sufficiency. Flour from the Doukhobor wheatlands in Saskatchewan was ground in three community mills. Eight sawmills cut lumber for building and furniture, and the community's kilns produced 2,500,000 bricks a year. A power station was built near Brilliant, and a large jam factory processed fruit from the orchards and provided a good source of cash income.

While Verigin retained control the Community functioned smoothly. All cash received from the sale of products or from outside work was placed in the common treasury. In return, the members drew food, clothing, and other necessities from the common stores. The pattern of living was collective; the large brick communal houses, which usually stood in pairs among the orchards, each accommodated between thirty and forty people. There was little privacy; curtains rather than doors divided individuals and couples from each other, and eating was in common. The arrangements, in fact, were strikingly similar to those for households in the country that Sir Thomas More described four centuries before in *Utopia*, though there is no indication that Verigin had read this book.

The lack of privacy and of personal control over earnings seems to have irked some members of the community even under Peter the Lordly's rule, but for the majority these disadvantages were more than balanced by the feeling of security produced by a community so largely self-contained. Nor should one forget the sense of moral protection created by belonging to a close group sharing one's own social and religious views. To sectarians who had regarded themselves for centuries as "peculiar people," always liable to persecution by a hostile world, such feelings are unusually important. As the living symbol of

them, as the strong-willed ruler-prophet-father who made independent decisions unnecessary, Verigin was the keystone of the system.

But the attempt to create an island of theocratic security was constantly threatened by the divergences between Doukhobor customs and the requirements of Canadian society. Buying their land had made the sect free of the need to make an official acknowledgment of allegiance to an earthly ruler; it had not removed the problem of coming to terms with laws that applied to all men, no matter how they held their land.

Conscription never became a major issue in Canada, since in neither World War did the authorities attempt to withdraw the Doukhobor exemption from military service, though there was a little trouble because of excessively officious local recruiters. It was in connection with registration of vital statistics and with education that the more serious difficulties arose.

Doukhobors believe that births and deaths are the concern of God and man, but not of the state; for this reason they are reluctant to register them, while the Sons of Freedom occasionally even refuse to bury their dead, arguing, like the Tibetans, that such a practice deprives carnivorous animals of their natural rights. As early as 1912 members of the Christian Community were imprisoned for refusing to comply with registration laws.

But it was education that bred—and still breeds—the most bitter disputes. Doukhobors are not opposed to all education. Even in Sons of Freedom settlements there are unofficial schools that teach the Russian language, and the only illiterate Doukhobors I have met were old women who had been born in Russia and spent their early childhood there. What the sect opposes is education in state schools, which they suspect of inculcating militarism.

It was not until the early 1920's that the authorities seriously tried to impose schooling. By that time seven hundred children in the Christian Community were receiving no formal education. Schools were built in their neighborhoods, and the Doukhobors, guided by Peter the

Lordly, dealt with the situation by evasion; children would attend school for a while and then stay away until the next drive began.

It was in this situation that the Sons of Freedom, whose influence had waned during the early part of the century, re-emerged as a powerful faction. Once again, they used shock tactics, adding to nudism the more emphatic method of arson. In November 1923 they set fire to one of the new schools. A few weeks later Verigin's own house was burned as a protest against his temporizing policy.

Whether the situation would have got out of Peter the Lordly's control one cannot surmise, for in October 1924 he was killed by a bomb placed in a train that was crossing the mountains from Grand Forks to Brilliant. Who placed the bomb, and whether it was intended for Verigin, has never been established. The police suspected the Sons of Freedom, and one is tempted to dwell on the possibilities of a semimagical sacrifice of the Christ-figure. In discussing the incident the Doukhobors themselves are inclined to attribute it to a plot fostered by the police, but such methods, while doubtless in keeping with Russian police methods under either dispensation, have little precedent in the history of the Canadian police. And in fact no clue has ever been found that would justify one in accepting either explanation or in even hazarding a guess at the identity of the actual assassin.

The death of Verigin left the sect with no generally acceptable leader. Minor prophets arose; one such was Louis Popoff, who styled himself Paul, Czar of Earth, and wore a white robe and a crown of fresh oranges. But none of these eccentrics gained substantial support, and when the faithful gathered at Peter the Lordly's tomb for the service that is held six weeks after a Doukhobor's death to celebrate the release of the spirit from the body, the only proposal that a majority favored was that a search be made for Peter the Lordly's son, who was believed to be alive in Russia.

Peter Petrovich Verigin was eventually discovered, the Russian authorities agreed to let him leave, and he reached

Canada in 1927. Like his father, Peter Petrovich had an emphatic personality, but the prudence of Peter the Lordly was lacking in his son; it was replaced by a streak of sadistic unbalance that made him wish to humiliate as well as to dominate his followers. Speeches by the new leader would degenerate into torrents of obscene abuse, and respected elders would be treated with contempt and sometimes with violence. Furthermore, Peter Petrovich openly broke the rules of Doukhobor living on whose observance his father had insisted so strongly; his drinking, particularly, was Gargantuan. This disconcerting behavior he explained by claiming that he was sent to root out complacency among the Doukhobors; he was at once the scapegoat and the iconoclast, and, in order to emphasize his role, he assumed the title of Chestiakov, or The Purger.

The Purger's arrival brought a sharp worsening of relations between the Doukhobors and the Canadian author-

A Doukhobor religious meeting, with bread and salt upon the table. (*Doukhobor Research Committee.*)



ities. Where Peter the Lordly had used traditional peasant evasion in dealing with the government, Peter the Purger favored defiance, the more flamboyant the better. Under his influence, the disagreements over education were aggravated by extreme behavior on both sides. The Doukhobors kept their children from school; the provincial authorities replied by seizing property to pay the fines imposed. In protest, the Sons of Freedom initiated mass nude parades and stepped up their arsonism, so that between 1929 and 1932 eighty burnings were attributed to them. In retaliation the Canadian governments passed discriminatory legislation that virtually turned the Doukhobors into second-class citizens. In 1931 all people of Doukhobor descent were disenfranchised in British Columbia; in 1934 the same provision was applied federally. Furthermore, in 1931 the criminal code was amended so that a penalty of three years' imprisonment became mandatory

Police arresting nudist protestors, 1950. (*George Diack.*)



for public displays of nudism; Canadian puritanism, humorless and unimaginative at the best of times, had been stirred into unthinking panic.

Peter the Purger took advantage of all this trouble to pose as the savior of the Doukhobors. He was destined, he revealed, to lead them out of their trials in Canada into the Promised Land dreamed of by the pilgrims of 1902. It lay in Mexico, and a White Horse would take them there. Such apocalyptic fantasies delighted his followers, and long debates took place in the Doukhobor villages as to whether the White Horse would be a Pegasus of vast dimensions on which all the faithful would actually ride, or whether it was merely a symbol of migration by some more normal means. Peter refused to be more explicit; all he would say was that the White Horse needed fodder, and in this way he conjured out of the secret hoards of his followers (who theoretically had no property of their own) a fund that has been estimated at various figures up to

Women praying before a burning house, Krestova, 1950. (*George Diack.*)



\$500,000. The White Horse never rode to Mexico. Instead, Verigin was imprisoned for perjury in 1932, and great numbers of his followers protested in the Adamite manner; six hundred of them were arrested, and a special penal settlement was established on an island in the Gulf of Georgia. Four hundred of their children, deprived of parental care, were placed in industrial schools, where they were often treated brutally in an attempt to impose education upon them; it is not surprising that, grown into manhood, many of these children were among the Sons of Freedom arsonists of the 1940's and 1950's.

By the mid-thirties it became evident that the Christian Community that Peter the Lordly had founded was moving towards disaster. Some of the blame can be placed on his son's chronic ineptitude as an administrator, but a more potent cause was the Depression. Had Peter the Lordly's plans for self-sufficiency been completed in time, it is possible that the economic circumstances of the 1930's might not have harmed the Christian Community materially. But money was still owing to banks and insurance companies on the loans that had been raised for power stations and reservoirs, and the fall in cash income which resulted from failure to find outside employment made it impossible for the Doukhobors to keep up payments.

By 1937 the Christian Community went into bankruptcy, and in the following year the creditors started foreclosure proceedings. The complete alienation of the land from the Doukhobors was prevented by the British Columbian government which, scared at the thought of several thousand people being rendered homeless, for once acted wisely and assumed responsibility for the \$300,000 that was owing. This allowed the Doukhobors to remain on their own lands, though their community organization disintegrated. As a monument to that experimental period the great bleak brick houses still stand in the mountain valleys, surrounded by straggling huts like Chagall villages, and the orchards—more dead wood than live—remain on the dry hillsides.

The breakup of the Community brought a virtual end to

Peter the Lordly's efforts to weld a communistic social and economic structure on to the Doukhobor religion—only tiny dissident groups have since tried unsuccessfully to revive this aspect of Doukhoborism—and the death in 1939 of Peter the Purger deprived the sect of the last of a long line of leaders regarded as semidivine. Since 1939, no holy leader has been recognized by a majority of the sect, and many Doukhobors claim that their ancient prophecies mark the younger Peter Verigin as the last of the living Christs, whose death presages the coming of God's Kingdom. Only the Sons of Freedom have still sought seriously for a Christly prophet, and for almost a decade now they have been under the influence of a certain Stephan Sorokin, a non-Doukhobor evangelist who appeared out of the displaced persons' camps of Europe, gained an extraordinary following among the radical Doukhobors, and then departed to Uruguay—ostensibly in search of a new home for the sect—where he has lived for years on funds supplied by the faithful in Canada.

In recent years Doukhoborism has continued to be sensational in its manifestations of protest. No year has passed without fire breaking out in the mountains of British Columbia as a result of some extreme impulse of protest against the world's evil or some desire for personal renunciation on the part of a Son of Freedom who burns his house to proclaim the sincerity of his religion. In 1947 there were 83 burnings and in 1953 there were 113; recently there have been fewer, but nobody in such mountain towns as Grand Forks or Castlegar would be surprised to see the night sky lit by flame or to hear half-naked Sons and Daughters of Freedom, led away by khaki-clad Mounted Police, chanting the traditional lament of Czarist exiles: "The chains are clanking, the road to Siberia is long." There have even been incidents in recent years which show at least a few of the younger Sons of Freedom crossing the boundary from protest into actual terrorism by dynamiting railway tracks and power installations; this, of course, echoes curiously the way in which the Russian populists of the nineteenth century passed over from the

protests of the 1870's to the actual terrorism of the 1880's and after. In the case of the Doukhobors in British Columbia, however, it is important to remember that these terrorist activities are few in number, have never—to my knowledge—had fatal results or been directed towards the actual killing of human beings, and have always involved only very tiny groups of conspirators.

All these acts are, indeed, part of a desperate rear-guard action against assimilation into Canadian society, an action which, if its manifestations were less violent, one might find heroic. The breakup of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, the lack of a unifying leader, the material temptations of North American ways of living, have all helped in recent years to break down Doukhobor identity. It is true that most Doukhobors cling to their own forms of religious observance and cherish the Russian language with remarkable devotion (one old man told me that without Russian his religion would die), but their peculiar social patterns are disintegrating under the erosion of a more materialistic and less co-operative life than their own.

The Sons of Freedom, with their stubborn maintenance of the old Doukhobor rejection of earthly authority, represent
Stephan Sorokin, leader of the Sons of Freedom. (*A. W. Wainman.*)



sent the dwindling core of resistance (a resistance nurtured, ironically, by the extraordinary stupidity of the right-wing British Columbian government, which has tried to hasten assimilation by kidnapping Doukhobor children and imprisoning them in special boarding schools). They realize, perhaps only half-consciously, that today Doukhobor identity is largely maintained by the perpetuation of external hostility; many members of the sect are conscious of their difference from their neighbors less because they themselves feel it than because Canadians emphasize it by resenting them. By performing acts that perpetuate this resentment, the Sons of Freedom not only protest against governmental injustice, which certainly exists; they also help to preserve, if only in a negative manner, the identity of their sect. They force their fellow Doukhobors to be on the defensive, to think of themselves as different from other people. And thus, in their own minds, they are keeping their religion alive so that, when the day comes, the Wrestlers of the Spirit will play the heroic part to which they are destined in the last battle against the forces of evil.

Yet each year their defiance seems more desperate, more doomed—perhaps by its own extremity, and more pathetic in the extravagant forms it takes. One realizes that in a generation or so the Doukhobors as one sees them today, with their abundant hospitality, and their fanatical destructiveness, with their scrubbed peasant homes, and their Oriental ideals of broad-hipped feminine beauty, will be as lost in the past as those millenarian sects of the seventeenth century of whom they often remind one so forcibly.

Charles A. Lindbergh:

The Politics of Nostalgia

Paul Seabury

In Franklin D. Roosevelt, a superb strategist confronted the isolationists. The war crisis, coming in 1939, had enhanced his popularity and augmented his influence over events. In his hands now lay the supreme asset of executive power and initiative. He commanded the loyalties of broad masses of the public, to whom the isolationists had to appeal if their cause were to succeed. Yet, in the late 1930's, their movement lacked a leader of comparable stature. In 1917, men of great power and repute had opposed Wilson and war: LaFollette, Norris, Debs, and Bryan. Among the noninterventionists of 1939 there were also many respectable and influential men; but by 1941 the most prominent voices came from men of little public stature. The White House and the interventionists turned their weapons against these with savage effectiveness; ultimately successful in identifying the cause with these men, they thus crippled it. Wit and mockery are usually the weapons of confidence; their effective employment by Roosevelt against such men as Hamilton Fish, Jr., Wheeler, Nye, and other Congressional leaders suggested his strength and their weakness. The odds against which they struggled were great; the initiative lay in historical events

far beyond their control, and in White House responses to them. Against Roosevelt and "history" the isolationists at best could only wage a defensive war; yet even the battlefield most favorable to their cause, Congress, was not the best, for here they confronted a legislature controlled by the President's own party.

Of all the isolationists, Charles A. Lindbergh provided an element of mass appeal which others had failed to supply. In the last year of the battle against intervention in the European war it seemed that in him the movement finally might acquire an ideological leader around whom discontented spirits could gather—one who, despite reticence and shyness, might establish a deeper sense of rapport with those parts of the Great Public alienated from "Roosevelt's war." Long a silent yet fervently admired hero, Lindbergh was a political *tabula rasa*; his sensational reappearance on the American scene in 1939 after three years of exile in Europe gave him unique advantages over others as spokesman of the cause. His long absence from the country, his silence on the grave domestic matters that had torn American politics asunder, gave him a political freshness lacking in every other major figure of the isolationist camp. His record was clear of any involvement in the politics of the New Deal era; and his sincerity the more plausible because of his apparent indifference to lesser causes than the large one he now embraced. Many things to many men, Lindbergh now offered, during these two short years, a rationale for noninvolvement in world politics which, some hoped, could reconcile temperate with intemperate, conservative with liberal, elements of the cause. Towards the end of this battle, the flyer had easily supplanted all other figures of the isolationist camp as its chief symbolic leader. To some alarmed interventionists he came to appear as a dangerous demagogue who—given an opportunity by events—might shred the fabric of American politics and reconstitute its elements in a novel perhaps extremely ominous fashion. Over him, at this point in his life, there came to hang the unsavory odium of anti-Semitism and of fondness for the totalitarian world.



The two Charles A. Lindberghs. (*Wide World Photo.*)

of Hitler; whether deserved or not, the reputation came to be credible to large numbers of Americans.

Surely there was something both puzzling and depressingly ironic about this change that came over a once so pretentious folk hero. Barely twelve years before, when as the "Lone Eagle" he had flown the Atlantic, Lindbergh had seemed momentarily to symbolize "America" itself; by this earlier great act of imagination, skill, and fortitude, he had seemed to revive among Americans of the jaded 1920's a half lost folk-image of themselves. By a single act, he had seemed to reaffirm, as John Ward has said, the extraordinarily attractive notion that America "represented a brief escape from the course of history, an emergence into a new and open world with the self-sufficient individual at its center." The simple and innocent virtues of lone struggles against nature—the commonplace glory of the native American—had somehow been made relevant to the new era of science and technology; and Americans reveled in this disclosure and in the young man who, singlehandedly, had made it.

Yet from the onset of his fame in the late 1920's a deep gulf of misunderstanding separated Lindbergh and the

great American public that so intemperately worshipped him. The homely virtues he wished himself to exemplify were wholly incongruous with the mass passions and excitements his feats aroused. Personal simplicity and reticence here confronted slavish adulation, orgiastic triumphs, and banal, monstrous public affections. The tragic kidnapping of his child enlarged this incongruity. The life he sought to exemplify not only proved incompatible with the public excitement that his very existence seemed to provoke; even living it in America became wholly impossible. Harassed by the press in moments of triumph and tragedy, revolted by the wild and morbid eagerness with which the public scavenged his life, Lindbergh in early 1936 took refuge in England with his family—an act of alienation from his homeland which, when it occurred, was something of an international scandal.

Some unfriendly writers later impugned Lindbergh's reticence and shyness as masquerade for an inner delight in fame: an affectation of virginal modesty contrived to further inflame the public's interest in him. Yet this analysis of the man was probably false. Self-exiled, the flyer now had sought to establish conditions in which a normal life for his family would be possible. As guests in a rustic home of Harold Nicolson, near a quiet Kentish village they found, for a while, a genial environment that an excitable America had denied them. But even in exile, the damage inflicted in the flyer's earlier encounter with mob culture was not wholly repaired. The very public image of Lindbergh so widely held in America seems to have gradually fused into his own image of himself; mixed together, they reinforced each other. In England Lindbergh could not divest himself of the mirror-image that his own culture had manufactured for him. Nicolson, his host, wrote of him some time later: "He would return to the little Kentish village where he lived. Slowly, the smoke of burning weeds would rise against the Autumn woods and lazily the apples would drop in the orchard. His mind had been sharpened by fame and tragedy until it had become hard as metal and as narrow as a chisel."

Even before leaving America in 1936 he had been clear enough in his own mind about the troubles of his own country. As a friend later told Roger Butterworth, Lindbergh once had said: "We Americans are a primitive people, we do not have discipline. Our moral standards are low. It shows up in the private lives of people we know—their drinking and their behavior with women. . . . It shows up in the newspapers, the morbid curiosity over crimes and murder trials. Americans seem to have little respect for law, or the rights of others."

The qualities that the flyer laboriously had cultivated in himself—abstinence, frugality, the manly skills and fortitude involved in coping with nature—were ones he esteemed in others and which, in the circle of his family, he sought to impart to his children. Yet in exile he found as little regard for these virtues as he had found at home. It was not that he came to dislike the English among whom he now lived. Rather it was that the solemn urbanity and the slow, almost organic manner of British life were also antithetical to the virtues that he had cultivated; and worse still, they came to appear to him as the comfortable qualities of a too-highly complex, static society, which forebode its decline and fall.

These grave forebodings aside, until the late 1930's Lindbergh never publicly had coped with issues of public policy and politics. Even in Europe he had shunned public life, immersing himself instead in technical research on aviation matters, and in scientific studies with the Frenchman Alexis Carrel. Only once, in Berlin in 1939, had he publicly spoken—and then, to fellow aviators in the Reich Air Ministry—on the theme of aviation and the future of Europe. The speech showed his growing concern with the European crisis, and showed, too, new intellectual concerns. Words and phrases—"heavy responsibility"; "carriers of destruction"; "fundamental revolutionary changes"; "new types of security—dynamic, not static"; "in intelligence, not forts"; "power which must be bound to knowledge"—betrayed a mind that was becoming political. In Europe, and not in America, the flyer had

encountered what, to him, were the central issues of the cultural crisis that first he had encountered in his own country; he took them to heart, and brought them back to America as parable. In 1940, he was to say to his own countrymen:

As I travelled through the European countries I saw the phenomenal military strength of Germany growing like a giant at the side of an aged and complacent England. France was awake to her danger, but far too occupied with personal ambitions, industrial troubles, and internal politics to make more than a feeble effort to rearm. In England, there was organization without spirit. In France there was spirit without organization. In Germany there was both.

In 1938, it was widely believed that Lindbergh had severed his ties with his home-country completely, to become one of a cosmopolitan, Europe-wide society of affluent wanderers. In early spring 1938 he left England with his wife, purchasing in France a small Channel island near the home of Alexis Carrel, where he moved that June. In the summer of that year, as the Czech crisis worsened he toured Eastern Europe—to Warsaw in mid-August; to Moscow a few days later, to inspect Soviet laboratories and aircraft plants; to Rumania and to Prague in early September. Visiting Germany that October, at the request of the American military attaché, he inspected Nazi airplane factories, and, at the end of his trip, received from Göring a high German military decoration. Evidently unconcerned by the mounting terror within the Third Reich, Lindbergh that winter reportedly planned to take up residence in Berlin, to study German aviation research.

Yet unexpectedly, in early April 1939, he returned home to America. He was silent, at the time, on the reasons for his trip; yet there is no doubt but that it was prompted by his own growing concern about the war crisis, and the threats posed by new German airpower to the European political order. The very day of his arrival in the United States, at a prearranged West Point rendezvous that afternoon, he met with General H. H. Arnold of the Army Air Corps, in the crowded bleachers at a baseball game, to tell him personally of the state of the

German air force, which he had recently seen. Within a month, at Arnold's behest, Lindbergh was serving on a new aircraft board of the Army, whose purpose it was to revise radically production plans for all types of American military aircraft. On the basis of his work, too, informal military agreements with the British and French were arranged to make possible purchase of airplanes from the United States, if, in return, they furnished data on their own latest combat planes.

Yet the motives for his return must have been far more complex. Months later, Lindbergh immersed himself in the cause of isolationism; he was excoriated and adulated, branded as traitor and hailed as redeemer. Roosevelt had called him a Copperhead and appeaser; Ickes, the Administration's political fox-terrier, had worried him unmercifully, branding him the "Knight of the German Eagle"; Dorothy Thompson found in him the makings of Hitler's North American *Gauleiter*. By the time of Pearl Harbor—partly as a consequence of his own doing—he became generally known as an anti-Semite, and his earlier, universal reputation as innocent American was besmirched by a new, unsavory audience. His stubborn refusal to retract or modify intemperate and unpolitic public remarks cost him many close and old friends.

What had prompted him to give up his seclusion for this new cause? Curiously, amidst all this furor, much of what Lindbergh wrote and said was either overlooked or angrily ignored by his critics. Yet it is to these things that we must look, for in them Lindbergh perhaps came closest of all the isolationists to formulating a metaphysical doctrine of nointervention which would pertain both to the present crisis, and to the ensuing political crises that would grip America in the years following the Second World War. The things which prompted his concern with the crisis of Hitler and fascism were to be the same things which later prompted many postwar Americans to take a stance of violent wrath against the issues of the cold war. Lindbergh, in the early 1940's, was to depict a cluster of political and cultural concerns which were

shared by many of his countrymen at the time; taken together, they help us understand the deep fervor which, a political hero, Lindbergh was able to arouse from the broad mass-following that but poorly understood his intellectual concerns.

On September 15, 1939, Lindbergh made his first radio speech to the American public. Much of what he then said was not distinguishable from the familiar rhetoric of peacetime isolationism. "In times of great emergency men of the same belief must gather together for mutual counsel and action. If they fail to do this, all that they stand for will be lost. I speak to those people in the United States of America who feel that the destiny of this country does not call for our involvement in European wars. We must decide whether or not we intend to become forever involved in this age-old struggle between the nations of Europe."

The new European war was not essentially different from previous ones; it was "simply one more of those age-old quarrels." The frontiers of America did not lie in Europe, despite, he said, what "foreign propaganda

Charles A. Lindbergh in Washington to testify against aid to Britain in January 1941. With him are (left) Representative Sol Bloom, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Representative Hamilton Fish, who invited Lindbergh to appear before the Committee. (*Wide World Photo.*)



ought to suggest. America's abstention from war should constitute her service to the West:

If war brings more Dark Ages to Europe, we can better preserve those things which we love and which we mourn the passing of in Europe today, by preserving them here. . . . This is the challenge—to carry on Western civilization.

But temperate advocacy of neutrality soon became chauvinist pleading. In October 1939 Lindbergh joined other isolationists in carping criticism of the Western Allies' refusal to repay their war debts, suggesting, also, that the Canadians prudently refrain from drawing "this hemisphere into a European war simply [*sic*] because they prefer the Crown of England to American independence." Through these two early speeches, the Colonel's words were not distinguishable from those of other important isolationists; they surely were quickened by a growing sense of impatience with and hostility to the Western powers; but then, it was these and not the Germans who wished to draw American forces into the war. Now, however, in late fall 1939, and in the following spring, Lindbergh gave vent to other quite novel concerns. There was, he said, no way at all of discovering any universal ethical issues at stake between the European belligerents. The Germans, in their own way, were "as much in the right as the English and French." "Right," after all, was not an absolute quality." Ideology was irrelevant; to assume that it mattered would, in effect, help prolong a struggle which was tearing the heart out of Europe. All the Continent, not merely part of it, was essential to the survival of the West.

It was here that eccentricities crept into Lindbergh's argument. For he saw now monstrous, inchoate enemies of civilization assembling outside the gates of Europe. Asiatic armies "stirred from their contemplation" to "feel the smothering strength of their numbers." "Teeming millions" in Asia, "wolves of lesser stature," bided their time "to spring on the warriors." Even now, "Oriental guns" were "turning Westward." "Asia" pressed "towards us on the Russian border." A "limitless foreign sea" lay outside the West. "Mongol and Persian and Moor" bided their

time while Europeans began to destroy their own citadel.

Some at this time preferred to read between the lines of these mystic sentences vaguely concealed attacks upon Communism, or to see in them a veiled attack upon Jewish culture. Surely since 1938 Lindbergh had shown signs of contempt for the Soviet Union; after his visit to Russia in August 1938 to inspect Soviet factories and laboratories, he had returned to the West, contemptuous of Soviet airpower; Molotov himself publicly had called him a "rat" and "spy" for his derogatory estimates; there was no love lost between Lindbergh and Communists after this. Yet it is doubtful whether his animus against them sprang from conventional anti-Communist views. In all of his speeches and writings the Colonel ignored mere "ideological" questions, including Marxism, which to him were irrelevancies. Transcending the whole European crisis was the issue of "racial survival"—not the "Aryan" doctrines peculiar to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, but his own unconventional doctrine gleaned from different sources. "Racial strength" of the "Caucasian peoples" was, he said, "what is vital"; "politics, a luxury."

However vaguely this concept of racial politics was embroidered, it seems to have dominated Lindbergh's technical judgments of the European war. The conflict should be ended before Caucasian Europe consumed itself. Surely he wrote in 1940, there would come a time when white peoples—Americans, Frenchmen, Germans, Englishmen—would join in common cause against races alien to Europe. He had no qualms about an American war in the Pacific against yellow men; later, in fact, he heroically and enthusiastically engaged in it. But this was a conflict against lesser breeds. For America to intervene in a white man's internecine quarrel would only prolong it and hasten the death of Western culture and civilization.

There were peculiarities in Lindbergh's cause which attracted but a few of his critics at the time failed to see. One could dismiss him, abruptly, as traitor, appeaser, or Nazi, and have done with it. One might seek to answer his technical arguments about Britain's inability to withstand German

erial assault and about the appropriate defense policy for America to adopt for hemispheric security. But the most difficult thing to do was to cope with his curious nonmilitary rationale for American nonintervention. His views about Germany were ambiguous; but even more peculiar was his endless reiteration that no really important ethical stakes were involved in the struggle. He stubbornly refused to discuss whether Nazism itself constituted an inner betrayal of Europe, thus laying himself open to charges of callous indifference to European humanity. He refused to discern the qualities of nihilism and antirationalism so blatantly present in National Socialism. Years after the war had ended, when in quieter times he assessed the reasons for Germany's folly and disaster, Lindbergh only saw, as cause, a national infatuation with "science" which, he wrote, had prompted Hitler and the Germans to turn their backs upon the "deeper human values" of their heritage. Setting up science as their god, they had been destroyed by it. That such an absurd misconstruction could be made of a wholly antirationalist and antiscientific movement—which demolished the very cultural conditions in which the scientific mind could freely work—seems incredible.

Yet what was equally curious was that Lindbergh, concerned to preserve the whole "culture" of the West, was so profoundly dissatisfied with it. His more thoughtful essays on the war were infused with romantic protest against its most characteristic features. To him, even his own profession—aviation itself—appeared as symptom of an underlying Western disease. "A tool specially shaped for Western hands," the airplane to him was "another Icarus to dominate the sky and, in turn, to be dominated by it." As military weapon it was a valuable asset for Westerners, providing "another barrier between the teeming millions of Asia and the Grecian inheritance of Europe." Yet the weapon had been made possible only by a vast derangement of the very culture that it now was capable of protecting. "Dependent on the intricate organization of life and industry," it carried within itself "the environ-

mental danger of a people too far separated from the soil and from the sea—the danger of that physical decline which so often goes with a high intellectual development.” Aviation not only could be seen as product of vastly accelerated “modern” processes; in turn it helped accelerate them even further. Science, technology, and their child, aviation, rendered war more dangerous than it ever before had been; they also now threatened to tear apart the very civilization that had given them birth.

Threatening as the perils of air warfare were, Lindbergh saw even greater ones. The “modern danger” sprang from the very bowels of urban civilization. The City, the secular order of the metropolitan West, appears to have troubled him as much as anything else. Within it, the modern intelligentsia covertly was engaged in betraying an older culture; within it also, modern man was being robbed of his natural integrity. “How long,” Lindbergh wrote in 1940, “can men thrive between walls of brick, walking on asphalt pavements, breathing the fumes of coal and oil, growing, working, dying, with hardly a thought of wind, the sky, and fields of grain, seeing only machine-made beauty, the mineral-like quality of life?”

Surely these were strange thoughts for an aviator whose own fame and accomplishments depended so much upon the very things against which he caviled. Lindbergh later admitted awareness of this paradox. In a book published in 1948 he recounted his personal disenchantment with science and technology, recalling his romance with life as an adolescent: “Science, freedom, beauty, adventure—what more could you ask of life?” But of these infatuations he jettisoned only science; while he remained personally involved in its derivative technology, he now preached to others whom he regarded as unaware of their foolhardy illusions. Living as an aviator on the ragged edge of human existence, delighting in his rash encounters with nature, he sought to recover the sense of mastery which “natural” man once possessed. This dangerous mission was filled with mystery. Brushing death in the lonely reaches of the sky, Lindbergh described his coming upon dark, myster-

ious realms of reality—through doors which, it seemed to him, he had tried since childhood to open. In moments of solitary danger, he would commune with inscrutable spirits who rode with him, “not as intruders or strangers,” but as “family and friends” regathered after “years of separation . . . ,” souls he seemed to have known “in some past incarnation.” They belonged “with the towering thunderheads and moonlit corridors of the sky. . . . Did they board my plane, unseen, as I flew between the temple’s pillars?”

Ranging high above a comfortable yet (to him) terribly contingent urban life, Lindbergh found in peril and mystery the conditions in which he could regain the integrity of what a denatured culture had stripped him. Both sky and the remembered past offered sanctuary from an unpleasant present. Again and again, the flyer recounted how during his flights he recaptured memories of experiences in a simpler civilization where man had confronted and mastered nature. The frontier and farmlands of Minnesota became the stage of his politics of nostalgia. There, in the Minnesota Valley, his own grandfather had experienced the Sioux wars, carving out his own Stearns County farmstead, coming to live with nature on equal terms. Even in his father’s time, which spanned the turn of the century, the upper Middle West still had been to him a relatively simple, stable, rural culture. As a boy, young Lindbergh joyfully had lived this life on the Upper Mississippi, often boating with his father from upper headstreams of the river down to the bank where his family homestead lay; his boyhood recollections were filled with the lore of this natural environment of woods, farmlands, and streams.

It was painful for him to be absent from such a life. When his father, elected as a Republican to Congress, took young Lindbergh to Washington, the boy felt none of the romantic civic excitement that the capital supposedly arouses in the minds of American youth. Instead, he felt pangs of incarceration. “For me,” he later wrote, “the city formed a prison, red brick houses replaced the woodlands on our farm. Concrete pavement jarred against my heels.

The crystal light of sky crept mangily into schoolrooms. It was the clank of street cars, not the hoot of owls, that woke me at night." He felt only boredom and discomfort watching political dramas from the visitors' gallery in Congress. "The House reminded me of a church. It was always too hot, and rather stuffy, and its speeches went on and on like sermons from a pulpit. . . . Sometimes you got a headache as you listened. . . . In Washington one lived with famous figures, saw history in the making. But one forgot about the sunsets, and lost the feel of branch to muscle."

Much of this distaste for urban culture was inherited from his forebears. To the elder Lindbergh, the great Eastern cities—notably Washington and New York—seemed to have been what Rome had been, once, to Luther. They were centers of "revelry and debauchery" of the rich, whom the Scandinavian lawyer despised not only for their wealth but also for their power and secret moral depravity. They were antithetical to his private model of a society of simple workingmen and honest farmers. They were dominated by evil "lords of special privilege" who erected in them gigantic architectural excrescences paid for by the toil of poor but honest men.

A consistent habit of revolt against such things was handed, in the Lindbergh family, from father to son, and to son again. With the elder Lindbergh, the "money question" had come to be almost an obsession, certainly the dominant theme of his political thought, both in Minnesota and in Washington. It had been his resolution, introduced into the House, which had set in motion the Pujo Money Trust Investigation of 1912. He had campaigned in Minnesota, too, against Rome and against the American Catholic hierarchy. "Read history," he once wrote, "you will find that everywhere, in all lands, and at all times, many of the high dignitaries of the Church of Rome have been the Ally of Oppression." But its origins were even deeper set in family history. In the early 1860's the flyer's own paternal grandfather, Ola Mansson, also had fought—in the Swedish parliament—against similar corporat

forces—railroads and banks—on behalf of an aroused peasant constituency; running afoul of state authorities, he had been arrested; and his emigration to America had been made possible by the intervention of the liberal Swedish crown prince, Oscar.

While for the father and grandfather the enemy was essentially the same in America as in Sweden, for Lindbergh the aviator, the problem of enemy and constituency was more complex. At heart, he always remained sentimentally attracted to this older way of life; yet success and fame radically had altered his "objective" position in society. Fearful as he may have remained about its dangers, outraged as he may have been at its revealed vices, he now was a very part of that social set of urbane Easterners against whom his father had fought. Indebted to both "science" and "society," he seems always to have sought to remain upon the fringes of both, determined never wholly to succumb to either. His marriage in 1929 to Anne Morrow dramatically accentuated this rupture with a family tradition. For the daughter of an Eastern banker-diplomat to marry the son of a Midwestern crusader against wealth and privilege seems strangely ironic, for Dwight Morrow had not only been at the center of the very "power elite" that Lindbergh, Senior, regarded as the "invisible organizers" the "bunco men"; to make things worse, Morrow also had been closely involved in the "war camp" of Morgan and Lamont, to which the elder Lindbergh had attributed his own martyrdom.

To Lindbergh, isolationist protest may have been a gesture of fealty to family custom; yet it cost him and his wife many friends from this cosmopolitan circle. "Charles at least has the memory of his family with him," Anne Lindbergh is said to have told a dinner companion in 1941, "I'm entirely alone." Yet not merely this memory alone sustained Lindbergh; for now there was also a new atmosphere of revived fame, which his political feats aroused. Across the country, crowds of disturbed Americans flocked into arenas, convention halls, and giant outdoor bowls to hear and see him. Usually more than ten thousand people

would turn out; in Hollywood, more than thirty thousand did. The America First Committee, carefully husbanding this prize, used him as its chief drawing card: chapter membership drives were held throughout the country, and the prize—Lindbergh as speaker—was held out to the most successful. Earlier, it is said, Lindbergh had despised crowds, but now, as he himself told one America First friend, “now, you know, when I can *talk* to them, why I really love it.”

Faced by such excited throngs, Lindbergh came to adopt a rhetoric far less polished, urbane, and judicious than that which first had informed his political articles and speeches. His original concern in 1939 had been for the fate of Europe as a whole; this, even by his own definition, had included America. Now he was swept up by a whirlwind of public excitement; the vocabulary became more strident, and filled with appeals to the patriotic and nationalist sentiments of his audience. What began as a one-man defense of Western culture ended as exaltation of a separate American destiny. “Let us carry on the American destiny of which our forefathers dreamed as they cut their farmlands from the virgin forest.” Speaking in Minneapolis in early 1941, Lindbergh recalled his father’s belief in trans-Appalachian America: “He believed that the future of America lay more in the farms of the Mississippi Valley than on the battlefields across the sea.” “Foreign influences” lurked in the highest circles of government (yet these came from the very European culture he wished to preserve). Yet—“what has happened to this nation,” he declaimed, “that it fears in maturity the forces it conquered in its youth?” In May 1941 he wholly abandoned his once-great concern for Europe. “What happens in Europe and Asia is of secondary importance to what is happening to us here in our own land. . . . Is the destiny of America to be forever merged with that of Europe? . . . We must stand for an independent American destiny.”

A few liberals—men like Norman Thomas and Chester Bowles—continued artlessly to imagine that Lindbergh’s cause also was their own. In July 1941 a prominent Eastern

liberal wrote Robert Stuart of America First about the need to establish a new "democratic party of the people" that could stand between domestic communist and fascist movements, which were threatening to overwhelm the two major parties. "To my mind," he wrote, "Lindbergh may, when the war is over, loom as the logical spokesman for such a group." The flyer could give leadership to "that vast group . . . of Americans who are determined to bring about the right kind of economic and social system through traditional, American, democratic methods. . . . Why," he asked, "doesn't Lindbergh run for the Senate in 1942?"

But surely by then these were fanciful daydreams. Most urban liberals from the beginning instinctively shunned Lindbergh. The broad public, while less skeptical of hero-politicians than they, shied away from him the moment his crusade began. "It is curious," William Allen White wrote in 1940, "how completely Charles Lindbergh has ceased to be an American hero. He is as honest as he ever was . . . but the folks just don't follow him." The volatile popularity stored up from his earlier exploits swiftly evaporated when poured into the engines of isolationist politics. Why this was so is not easy to tell; perhaps these qualities of heroism and reckless adventurousness, so reminiscent of Halliburton, Lawrence, and Hemingway (even of Lindbergh himself) prompted this public uneasiness. Bernard DeVoto likened him, both in fame and in irresponsibility, to Frémont; both men had spent their accumulated capital of fame upon subsequent reckless political adventure—in Frémont's case, for a cause that endangered the lives of peaceable Californians; in Lindbergh's, for a cause that endangered Americans as a whole. The romantic genius-hero, flaunting and even creating danger for himself and others, was after all a Nietzschean figure; Americans who once had welcomed Lindbergh's youthful heroism as relief from routine, dull urban life now seemed to recoil at such qualities when applied to politics. In the late 1930's political heroics were far more characteristic of Central Europe than of the West.

Yet there were many who did listen. Was it Lindbergh's ideas or his presence that chiefly conferred upon him this new if limited fame? The two were not easily separable. There was surely charismatic appeal to some in the presence of the lanky, reticent, sincere, and handsome man who stood above them on the platforms of great meeting-halls. He spoke with an old-fashioned rhetoric: "Men and women of Minnesota . . .," "men and women of California. . . ." Always, in his speeches, was the theme of recovery—of lost virtues, lost self-reliance, of an independent control of one's own and one's country's destiny. His formula for personal virtuous behavior became enlarged to embrace the nation. Once when Harold Ickes had blasted away at the flyer, one of Lindbergh's avid supporters angrily had written to protest: "Every person knows that Charles Lindbergh is an extremely self-reliant man. Consequently, it would be difficult for him to propagate the idea of relying on Great Britain or on any other foreign government to defend our democracy and our way of life. . . ."

Lindbergh's meteoric political career, like so many other things, was abruptly cut short by the sudden Japanese attack. Only that spring, mindful, perhaps, of the cruel Minnesota political atmosphere in 1918, when his father had been stoned and persecuted as traitor for opposing an earlier war—Lindbergh had cast doubt upon the ability of democratic institutions to weather the war crisis: "I do not know how much longer free speech will be allowed in this country." Later, he suggested that the 1940 election might be the last that America would see. Many who were not aware of his acute memories of his father's tragic fate, carried rebuke too far: Lindbergh, they argued, hypocritically feared for the health of the very institutions he held in contempt. In the fall of 1941, goaded by premonitions of defeat in his crusade, Lindbergh in Des Moines struck out against the three "war-making" forces at work in America: "the British," the Administration, and "the Jews." Again, a parallel to his father's bitter Minnesota campaign against war and war-makers in 1918; for there, facing almost inevitable defeat in his cam-

campaign for the governorship, Lindbergh, Senior, had turned against another supposedly un-American force: the Catholic Church and hierarchy. Neither sudden attack could have been designed to augment the popularity of an unpopular cause; neither sprang from a sense of power. Impending defeat often prompts the loser to bare his deepest underlying beliefs about his own cause. Lindbergh, years later, was to remark that then, sensing imminent failure, he had wished, in candor, to set straight the record of his beliefs. The speech, made in early September 1941, created a vast national explosion, rocking the leadership of the America First Committee, and bringing upon Lindbergh's head storms of vituperation. Even such rabid isolationists as Colonel Robert R. McCormick publicly rebuked him in strong language. The speech irreparably damaged the isolationists' cause by linking it openly with massive undercurrents of native anti-Semitism which the war crisis inevitably had liberated; finally it isolated Lindbergh from virtually all his moderate associates—some of whom once had wished to make him head of the new America First political organization. Compelled, by his own stubbornness and by these ensuing passionate repercussions, further and further into the welcoming company of right-wing extremists, Lindbergh now was driven to the edge of things, his future now bound up with the fortunes of domestic political extremism. Pearl Harbor found him in seclusion, in his isolated home on Martha's Vineyard.

There was a kind of inexorableness in this personal tragedy: his father's politics similarly had been marked by some of the same qualities—the exaggerated description of hidden enemies; the stubborn, courageous willingness to suffer persecution for an obviously unpopular cause; the rigid refusal to prevaricate and compromise. Yet to many, years later, the father's memory remained that of a great man, a courageous and unyielding Progressive. As politician the younger Lindbergh never once obtained such a reputation. What was different? The times, partly; invoking a paternal tradition already antiquated by the swift passage of time, Lindbergh remembered his father's enemies—the

cosmopolitans, the "power elites"—but, in his romantic withdrawal from constructive domestic politics, he forgo the friends. His programs and political interests were singularly bereft of any domestic particularity; his father's had been specific. His concerns were blurred and meta-physical, never—save in tactical military matters—concrete. Other things were relevant; his own profession—aviation—had withdrawn him from any intimate, daily touch with the tangible political affairs which had been so commonplace to his father; his personal family tragedy had withdrawn him still further. There can be little doubt but that Lindbergh had no anticipation of the disturbed neurotic audiences that—at mention of his name—would rally to him as a "cause"; probably those whom he had expected to be drawn to him were the same as those down-trodden, "exploited" ordinary Americans who once, long ago, had come to his father. Now he stood, as one with a mass audience—living dramatically an experience that once he had shared with his father. But "ordinary" Americans shunned him.

We cannot know what thoughts ran through Lindbergh's mind in the long aftermath of this defeat. In 1941 he was barely forty years of age; a whole new political career might have stood before him. The previous spring, Republican circles in Washington buzzed with rumors that he prepared to re-establish residence in his old home state, Minnesota—in the Sixth Congressional District, which his father once had represented. The House seat now was filled by Harold Knutson, a veteran Congressional isolationist. The year before, Knutson in fact had offered to withdraw his candidacy in favor of the younger Lindbergh. That summer and fall, reports from Minnesota were that in 1942 Lindbergh—with strong support from within the state Republican organization—would be asked to enter the Senatorial primary against the liberal newspaperman Joseph Ball, whom Governor Stassen had appointed to succeed the late Ernest Lundeen in 1940. In 1938, with some success, right-wing Republicans had turned against Governor Benson and his Farmer-Labor Party, in a cam-

campaign that included "Jew-baiting." The campaign failed; yet with Lindbergh as candidate, Republican anti-Semitism, coupled with the locally magic name of Lindbergh, might draw away many of the rural voters whom Benson and the Farmer-Laborites once had commanded—and bring local success to the Republican Party. The Minnesota campaign, it was rumored, might be coupled with a similar one in Wisconsin, where Philip LaFollette would attempt to resuscitate his defunct National Progressive Party, replete with its disturbing symbolic resemblances to National Socialism. As one political commentator wrote at the time:

A desperate national battle may be beginning over what kind of society the United States is to have after the war. There can be no doubt that Lindbergh and a number of men around him see the isolationist movement as a means not only eventually to overturn the New Deal but to usher in the American wave of the future.

Throughout all of this Lindbergh was silent about his political ambitions and aspirations. Never publicly nor in known written correspondence with America First leaders did he show a willingness to act or to be "available" for such a political career. The war came; he sank into obscurity. Bereft of military rank (which after he relinquished it, was never restored by Stimson in clemency), he went to work with Henry Ford at Willow Run as technical consultant—finding haven with the mechanical genius whose own views of politics, while somewhat more bizarre, resembled his own. There, he worked unostentatiously with the technical problems of aircraft production, often testing high-altitude planes at great personal risk. Later, still as private consultant and with no military rank, he served in the Pacific war against the Japanese, flying combat missions, and, it is said, shooting down several attacking planes. Here, in the Pacific, was the war to assuage his own romantic wish to guard the ramparts of his metaphysical Western civilization; he fought it well and modestly. In his absence from America, his name and cause were pilfered by some who never had been his friends,

but who eagerly anticipated a community of future purposes with him in American politics. In Minneapolis, in the fall of 1943, Gerald L. K. Smith, the native fascist, announced the formation of his new America First Party—to carry on the name, but not the organization, of the earlier, now moribund Robert Wood committee, without the latter's consent. "America First means business," Smith told Minnesotans; if Roosevelt and Willkie were both renominated in 1944, this party would "jump into the field with its own candidates." Leading them, Smith said, would be the flyer-isolationist, Charles A. Lindbergh. We can never know, perhaps, whether it was prudence, revulsion, or indifference that turned Lindbergh away from this newly inflamed, and scattered constituency. When he returned from the Far Eastern war in 1945, the climate of American politics hardly was congenial to his former purposes. In July of that year, he re-emerged into public view, to announce that the seeds of "World War III" were being "sown in Europe"; that November he met privately with fifteen Midwestern Republican Congressmen, former isolationists, telling them of the need to maintain American airpower, and of the need for atomic secrecy. The period of new atomic war, in 1945, led him, as it led many others, to support an international organization to "maintain peace." But for him the nascent United Nations should not be based upon the principles of the "equality of men" or of nations. To apply such a principle would result in handing over control of the world to nations with the largest populations—India, China, and Russia—nations that, in Lindbergh's eyes, always had represented "non-Europe." The organization, to succeed, would have to be controlled by nations with "ability," i.e., the "Western peoples." But, with these comments, Lindbergh as a political figure passed. The European world, which had once had wished to "save" by American abstention from its wars, which later he had denounced in radical, nationalist language, now was politically collapsed. His own America, and the Soviet Union, had overwhelmed it.

Lives of the Historians, I:

Herodotus

Russell Meiggs

Herodotus shares with other Greek and Roman historians the great advantage of having left no record of his private life. The few scraps that ancient tradition records add very little to his own book and take nothing away. We know where he was born and approximately when; we know something of his travels. His personal relationships, his inner reflections, his reaction to contemporary events elude us. There is no problem of reconciling the personality revealed in his published book with the confidential revelations of diary or letters. We are left to judge him by his book, and by his book alone.

Early in the history of ancient literary criticism, he was called "the Father of History." The title was revived with enthusiasm in the Renaissance and is still current coin; but there have been dissenters. Thucydides would have resented the tribute and claimed it for himself. To Thucydides, Herodotus was a storyteller, who pandered to popular tastes but had nothing to offer posterity; and many others, ancient and modern, have followed Thucydides' lead. Herodotus' reputation suffered inevitably with the exuberant growth of rational criticism in the nineteenth century; and he was sometimes regarded as little more



Greek bust of Herodotus, dating from the second century B.C. (Bettmann Archive)

than a romantic liar; but closer study of his work against the background of his times has redressed the balance and justified his title. Today perhaps there is more danger of overstating his claims as an historian.

Many of the influences that helped to shape his mind were ill-suited to the training of historians. When he was growing up, prose writing and the ways of thinking that call for prose were still young. Verse had not yet been superseded as the natural language of narrative, description, and personal comment. Herodotus was brought up on the poets. It was difficult to break away from the poetic way of thinking and feeling; and there is still much of the poet in him.

The epic had run its course; but its influence was yet strong. Herodotus knew his Homer well, and the other epics now lost. He uses epic phrases, and much of his characterization falls in the epic mold; from the epic poets he learned instinctively to weave a complex narrative. More important was tragedy, which was becoming the dominant literary form of the Aegean world. Like the early tragedians, Herodotus was fascinated by the interplay of divine and human forces, revealed in the rise and fall of great characters. Aeschylus had written a tragedy centered on Xerxes' invasion of Greece. Herodotus echoes the language in his description of the battle of Salamis, and has caught the pervading spirit of the play—the sharp contrast between the wealth of Asia and the poverty of Greece, the overweening pride of Xerxes, who chastised even the elements, that led to the great Persian disaster.

The influence of the form and spirit of tragedy can be seen throughout his work; and many of his historical sketches, with little adaptation, could be fitted to the form of tragedy. He traces the rise of kings and tyrants. At the height of their fortunes comes the moment of doubt, when a warning is heard but remains unheeded; then comes the inevitable doom. The warning figure, who sees the future but cannot influence events, is a stock character in tragedy; he recurs again and again in Herodotus. Croesus, king of Lydia, having amassed wealth and power, and counting

himself the most prosperous of men, is visited by Solon, who reminds him of the instability of human fortune. Before his ill-judged attack on the Persians, a Lydian noble tries to dissuade him. Croesus ignores the warnings and loses all. So Xerxes, too, could have been saved if he had listened to the warnings of dreams and counselors and abandoned his plans to invade Greece. Such scenes heighten the tragic effect; but they are not history.

Herodotus also inherited the folk tale, which is dangerous equipment for a historian. The folk tale has left little trace in the mainstream of Greek literature. Its natural home was (and still is) in the East; and it was probably more familiar to eastern Greeks like Herodotus than to mainlanders. Stories that would fit well into the early books of the Old Testament, or into the *Arabian Nights*, are thickly scattered in Herodotus. These stories are vivid, picturesque, and circumstantial. Dreams figure prominently; three and seven are the favorite numbers; detail is elaborated as in stories told to children, and vividness is emphasized by the use of direct speech. It is the story that counts; and the same story can be shifted to different characters without a qualm. Such stories have nothing to do with history; but they affect Herodotus' treatment of the more strictly historical parts of his narrative.

Had this been the sum total of Herodotus' inheritance, he could never have been a historian. It was the work of early prose writers that made it possible for him to be more than a storyteller; and his greatest debt was to the early geographers, particularly Hecataeus of Miletus. At the end of the sixth century B.C., Hecataeus had traveled widely and written a description of the then known world. He listed in order the peoples of the coast lands and as far inland as he could secure evidence, described their customs, and explained, when he could, the origin of place names. To the geographers Herodotus owes his sense of the importance of personal observation and inquiry, which he was to extend on his travels from geography to history.

Hecataeus had also written about early Greek myths. Homer and the other epic poets were full of strange stories

and ancient legends. From these an attempt was made to build up a history of Greece in the Heroic Age and earlier. Hecataeus' aim was to reduce these stories to consistency and rationalize them. Herodotus follows in his steps. Helen could not have been in Troy throughout the long siege, as Homer relates, because Priam would surely have surrendered her to save Troy: she was left by Paris in Egypt and found there later by Menelaus. There was a story, told by the Greeks, that when Heracles in Egypt was being led out to be sacrificed, he turned and slew all the Egyptians. This is nonsense, declares Herodotus. The Egyptians, who do not sacrifice even animals, would certainly not sacrifice a man. And how could one man slay many ten thousands? Such rationalization of myths does not produce history; but it helped to sharpen the critical faculty.

Another tendency of his time was more fruitful. Men were beginning to become interested in historical records; and, by relating temple dedications and public memorials to historical events, local antiquaries were building up skeleton histories of their states. Several such local chronicles were written in Herodotus' lifetime, and some of them he may have used. He certainly used their methods and, whenever he could, confirmed his statements by reference to monuments he could examine; but he advanced far beyond the chronicle in the scale of his theme and in the form in which he presented it.

Herodotus was still a boy when Xerxes led the Persian forces to add Greece to his Empire; and their dramatic defeat must have made a deep impression in his home. It was followed by a counteroffensive, led by Athens, to liberate the eastern Greeks from Persia and to take revenge for Xerxes' invasion. Herodotus' early life was dominated by the clash between East and West. At some point he decided to write the story of the great war.

This he was well fitted to do. Born on the periphery of the Greek world at Halicarnassus, he was less deeply committed than an Athenian would have been, and better able to take a detached view. His objectivity is one of his main

virtues as an historian. Later Greeks pointed the contrast between East and West too sharply. Herodotus knew better, and shows his intentions in his preface: "This is the record of the enquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that what men have done may not be blotted out by time, and that the great and marvelous deeds performed by both Greeks and barbarians may not be without fame; and I include the reason why they went to war with one another." Persians as well as Greeks must have their due; and among the Persians he describes there are many sympathetic portraits. He depicts their customs and emphasizes their respect for bravery, strength, and, above all, truth: not many Greeks of his day would have been so broad-minded about the national enemy. Even Greeks who found refuge with the Persians are not irretrievably damned. Demaratus, the Spartan king, came into conflict with his colleague Cleomenes and was unscrupulously deposed. He crossed over to the Persians and accompanied Xerxes in his invasion. But in Herodotus he remains a dignified figure. His deposition was unjust; and both Cleomenes, who was responsible, and Leotychidas, who replaced him, paid the penalty under divine providence.

Similarly, his hatred of tyranny as a form of government does not distort his picture of individual tyrants. Polycrates, who built up Samian power and earned a reputation for magnificence, is sympathetically treated. Peisistratus ruled Athens well and maintained the existing laws. Artemisia, tyrant of his own city Halicarnassus, with whose descendant he had personally clashed, is clearly admired. She followed Xerxes and fought against Greeks; but she was a woman of character.

In compiling his history, Herodotus had very little written material to help him. He was obliged to travel, when and as he could in merchantmen, to find his sources. To trace the rise of Persia, he visited the countries that Persia had absorbed and made such contacts as he could with those who knew most about the Persian kingdom. Nor could he rely on reading for the Greek part of his story. To build up his picture of the Greek States before the

Persian invasion, he traveled to the cities themselves. In search of material and to satisfy his curiosity, he voyaged to Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Cyrene, and Scythia, to most of the leading states of Greece and to the main battlefields. The result is a travel book as well as a work of history.

In the second half of the history, from the time when Xerxes musters his forces, the narrative moves swiftly on and keeps closely to its central theme. In the first half, the rise of Persia and the early stages of the clash between Greeks and Persians seem to provide no more than a thread on which digressions are hung. The story of Persian conquests involves descriptions of the countries conquered or attacked; and the length of these descriptions depends not on their importance to the main theme but on their intrinsic interest. "I am going to lengthen my story about Egypt because it has so many marvelous things and works that defy description: no other country can compare with it." And the reason he gives for dwelling on Samian history is that the three greatest works in Greece are to be found in the island; the aqueduct-tunnel cut through a mountain, the harbor mole, and the great temple of Hera.

If we insist on strict standards of historical relevance, we shall be disappointed; but if we accept his book as he designed it, we enjoy and respect him. Throughout his travels he has a wide-ranging curiosity and a vivid interest in all he sees and hears. He particularly enjoys the spectacular in nature and building; but geography, agriculture, trade and industry, social and religious customs all come within his field. All are relevant to the understanding of a people.

As a geographer, he has a keen eye and a critical mind. "It is clear even to one who has not been told but has seen it, provided, of course, that he has intelligence, that the part of Egypt to which the Greeks sail [the Delta] is recovered land and the gift of the river." Hecataeus had, in fact, already called the Delta "the gift of the river"; Herodotus is annoyed at having been anticipated; but he adds the evidence of his own eyes. You can see

shells on the hills and salt gushing up which damages even the Pyramids; and the soil is quite different from that of neighboring Arabia or Libya. He compares the silting up of the Delta with the action of other rivers that he has seen in Asia Minor and in Greece.

He is quick to note the nature of soils, the character of the crops, and the general formation of the land. He has other geographical accounts to follow and uses them, but checks, adds, and corrects. When he has no personal evidence and no reliable witnesses, he is usually cautious. Maps cannot be made schematically, arguing from the unknown to the known: "Whoever connects the Nile with Oceanus involves the story in obscurity and has no proof. For I at any rate know of no river Oceanus. I believe that Homer or one of the earlier poets invented the name." "I laugh when I see many men having drawn maps of the world showing Oceanus encircling the earth, which they make round as if it were turned on the lathe."

Europe had not been fully explored. "I have no secure information (he admits) to give about the furthest parts of Europe towards the west. For I do not believe in a river Eridanus flowing into the northern sea, from which they say that the Amber comes, nor have I any knowledge of any Kassiterides Islands from which tin comes to us. I have not been able to learn from any eyewitness, though I have tried hard, that there is sea beyond Europe." He knows that much gold comes from the north of Europe but he cannot believe the common story that the Arimaspi one-eyed men, steal it from griffins. "I do not believe there are men born with one eye, in other respects like other men." The Thracians say that the land beyond the Danube swarms with bees which prevent men's further passage. "This seems to me unlikely, for these creatures appear to hate the cold."

In his treatment of geographical problems Herodotus argues rationally; and the same alertness is shown in his description of customs, religious and social. In Egypt, he is puzzled when he is told of the introduction of Heracles among the twelve gods 17,000 years before the time of

Amasis. How does this square with the Greek Heracles, a living hero less than a thousand years before his own time? To find the answer, he makes a special visit to Tyre, where he knows that there is an ancient temple of Heracles, and finds that his cult, too, was established long before the Greeks; and, for further confirmation, he visits another temple of Heracles, on the island of Thasos.

Wherever he can he relates what he hears to his own experience. In Egypt he is told of the conquests in Asia Minor of the Egyptian king, Sesostris. He recalls pillars that he has seen, supposed to commemorate these conquests; and with this expedition he connects the Egyptian origin of the Colchians which he had noted in his travels. "I noticed this [he proudly remarks] before I heard it from others," and proceeds to give reasons that would do credit to an anthropologist. Both peoples have black skin and curly hair; but this, he admits, is not significant: it is an attribute shared by many others. More important, the Colchians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians are the only people who have practiced circumcision from the beginning. Colchians and Egyptians both work linen in the same way; and in their language and their whole way of life they resemble one another. In dealing with such topics Herodotus could be critical and shrewd. He asked the right kind of questions and used his eyes intelligently.

Not all he has to tell us about the countries he visited is up to this level. Knowing no language but Greek, he was easily led astray by the natives. He makes a sharp distinction in his account of Egypt between what he has derived from his own personal observation, inquiries, and judgment, and what he owes to Egyptian sources. He brings to life the agriculture of Mesopotamia and gives a vivid description of Mesopotamian river boats; but his guided tour round the buildings of Babylon has left both him and the modern archaeologist exceedingly bewildered. For his history of Babylon, he had to rely on the priests; and they had good reason to suppress the truth.

The emphasis on the need for personal observation and inquiry, which recurs throughout the geographical and

sociological side of his work, is extended to his collection of historical evidence. Whenever he could, he related what he was told to monuments that he could personally examine. His description of the colonization of Cyrene introduces the story of the Samian Colaeus' lucking trading venture to Tartessus near Cadiz; and he recalls a dedication in the Samian Heraeum recording the gift of a tithe of the profits. He copies the Greek epitaphs at Thermopylae and notes the bronze chariot and fetters on the Acropolis, which commemorated an Athenian victory over the Boeotians and Chalcidians. Knowing that all states consulted the Delphic Oracle, he makes careful use of the Delphic monuments and traditions.

But, in piecing together his history, he was mainly dependent on what he was told. His greatest merits are the extensiveness of his inquiries and the honesty of his reporting. He prefers two witnesses to one, and normally—but not always—leaves a conflict of traditions unresolved. He insists that it is his duty to repeat what he is told even though he may not personally believe it; but he is not merely an uncritical retailer of stories. Even though he sometimes fails to detect it, he is fully aware of the danger of prejudice. Every Greek state had its own self-centered account of what happened in the Persian wars; later feuds distorted the truth. The Athenians said that the Corinthians fled before the battle of Salamis; but Herodotus knows another version that they fought bravely. He could have pieced together the Greek part of his story without moving from Athens; but he preferred to learn about Sparta in Sparta.

It has often been said that Herodotus was dazzled by Pericles, and that his history of Athens is Athenian history as the Alcmaeonides, from whom Pericles stemmed, liked to tell it. This, however, is a superficial judgment. Herodotus, the Alcmaeonides are by no means the consistent heroes of the piece. He knows that they made the pact with the tyrant Peisistratus; the founder of the family fortune, Alcmaeon, is treated in a very lighthearted style.

invited by Croesus to take away as much gold as he liked, he had dressed for the part, stuffed his boots, dress, and hair with gold dust and emerged from Croesus' treasury resembling anything rather than a man." One of the family's greatest claims to fame were the democratic reforms of Cleisthenes, based on the change from racial to local tribes. Herodotus' comment is by no means flattering: "In changing the Ionic tribes he was, I think, imitating his mother's father Cleisthenes, tyrant of Sicyon."

The main credit for the Greek victory over Persia Herodotus boldly ascribes to Athens: "Here I am compelled to declare a judgment which most men will dislike. Nevertheless I shall not withhold what seems to me the truth. . . . If anyone said that the Athenians were the saviors of Greece, he would not miss the truth." This judgment is not due to Athenian patronage or pressure. It is Herodotus' own view; and he has good reason for it. Without the large Athenian fleet, he argues, the Greeks could not have resisted by sea, and without a protecting fleet the land forces would have been helpless and would have disintegrated.

Yet, as a historical writer, Herodotus has many serious weaknesses. He had had no experience of military command and the movements of large armies. Though he had visited the battlefields in his descriptions of the fighting, he is closer to the poet than to the military historian. How many different battles of Salamis have been reconstructed from his account? Nor can he be trusted with numbers. He has a passion for figures and loves calculations. Even in the moral discourse of Solon with Croesus, he yields to his weakness. Solon's simple message was that prosperity is unstable. But the lesson is presented statistically. "I set the span of a man's life at 70 years. These 70 years give 5,200 days; but if alternate years are longer by a month, that the seasons may fall right, then there are 35 intercalary months to be added to the 70 years, and these months give 1,500 days. Of all these days in 70 years, 6,250 in all, no two days bring anything alike." In com-

mon with many other Greek and Roman historians he has no realistic grasp of large numbers. The size of Xerxes' force is wildly exaggerated.

Living, as he still did, in a world that saw the hand of God in everything, it was all the more difficult for Herodotus to apply the critical approach he showed when confronted with physical problems to human events and historical causes. He had inherited the contemporary belief in dreams, oracles, and portents. For him there is a divine power that works in human history; and this divine power is not expressed by the Olympic gods, acting with separate departmental responsibilities, but in a strange controlling force behind the scenes. "Great wrong-doings [he announces] bring great punishment from the gods" and most of the villains of his history come to a bad end. But God is also a jealous god and a disturbing factor, who strikes down the mighty but is not troubled by the lowly. Great prosperity may lead to pride, to arrogance and sin and so to disaster; but it is itself dangerous. The idea of the instability of material strength and prosperity obsessed Herodotus. "As I go forward in my story I will make notes of cities great and small, for those that were once great, most of them have become small, and those that were great in my day were formerly small. Knowing therefore that human prosperity never abides in the same place I shall write of both alike." He had traced the rise and fall of many empires. He had sketched the beginning of Athenian power. He must have wondered what would come of the Athenian empire; but on the subject of Athenian imperialism he remains deliberately silent.

Destiny hangs over individual characters as well as over kingdoms. "When it was fated that disaster should come to him" is one of the historian's favorite refrains. But his belief in an external control of events does not preclude the search for human causes. Though Apollo's oracle which had prophesied that vengeance would fall on the fifth descendant of the usurper Gyges, looms large in the story of Croesus' fall, Herodotus sees that Croesus, who

He attacked Cyrus, was attempting a land-grab before Persian power could be consolidated. And, in tracing the origin of the great war, he shows a sound historical grasp of the relevant issues. He first pays lip service to the mythologists, relating the old legends to the feud between East and West, the story of rape and counterrape, the seizure of Io, Helen, and Medea; but he quickly passes on to knowledge that he can personally control. "I begin with the man who first to my knowledge dealt unjustly with the Greeks"; and so the story begins with Croesus. It was a good starting point; for Croesus was the first to bring the Eastern Greeks securely into his empire; and the conquest of Croesus by Cyrus brought them within the Persian empire. The revolt of these Greeks was supported by Athens and Eretria; and the attacks on mainland Greece followed as a logical consequence.

But, though the main lines are securely drawn, the critical historian is always overshadowed by the storyteller. Herodotus' history remains very personal. Cambyses' invasion of Egypt, a logical stage in the extension of the Persian Empire, derives from the trickery of a disgruntled Egyptian doctor. Amasis, King of Egypt, breaks off his alliance with Polycrates of Samos, not for any political reason but because he knows that such great prosperity will come to no good end. The Ionian revolt is the desperate bid of a Milesian adventurer; there is no examination of the underlying causes that led the eastern Greeks to make their bid for freedom.

Not all his digressions are carefully weighed. It is impossible to make a completely consistent picture of his sixth-century chronology; and it is dangerous to press individual passages too hard. He knows from the poets that Calcaeus threw away his shield in a war between Athens and Mytilene for Sigeum. From an Athenian source, he has learned that Peisistratus captured Sigeum. He did not ask himself whether there were two wars or one, whether Calcaeus was, in fact, contemporary with Peisistratus. From what we know of Solon's dates it is highly probable that

he did not visit Croesus; but the scene between Solon and Croesus is of the type that in Herodotus we should always suspect. The contrast between the wise man's sense of true values and the rich man's confidence in material things is a general theme, to which names are lightly attached. The story has originated in a poetic fancy.

But, when all his limitations have been emphasized, the achievement of Herodotus as a historian remains impressive. Very few Greek and Roman historians were so conscientious in collecting their material. His sources were of varying value; but some of them were remarkably good. His description of Persian organization is based on Persian records. His successors could add little to his account of Athenian history in the sixth century. He grasped the main essence of Spartan institutions. He understood the importance to the historian of monuments and appreciated the influence of geography on history. Though individual episodes are wrongly placed, especially in minor digressions, he attached due weight to his chronological framework. On the basis of king-lists, he built up a coherent and remarkably accurate outline of Eastern history; and he was able to correlate Eastern and Western events. As he approaches the climax of his history, his chronology becomes more precise. He should not be blamed for lacking the critical penetration in analyzing human action and state policies that Thucydides owed to a very different intellectual background.

The form, as well as the content, of his history compels respect. His style is fluent, picturesque, and individual. His composition, though at first it may seem haphazard, is worked out with great care. He has covered an enormous span in time and space, but has reduced it to order. He may deliberately withhold material, to use it in a more telling context; he wanders from his main theme without losing himself. In the opening books he is primarily concerned with the rise of Persia; but, by carefully planned digressions, he at the same time introduces the leading states of the Greek mainland. Each digression is relevant

to its context; but they are so planned that together they give a continuous history of Athens and Sparta from the time of Croesus to the invasion of Xerxes, and provide sufficient material to establish the character and importance of the other leading states. By whatever stages Herodotus' book reached its present form, there is no reason to believe that he would have wished to revise the main structure.

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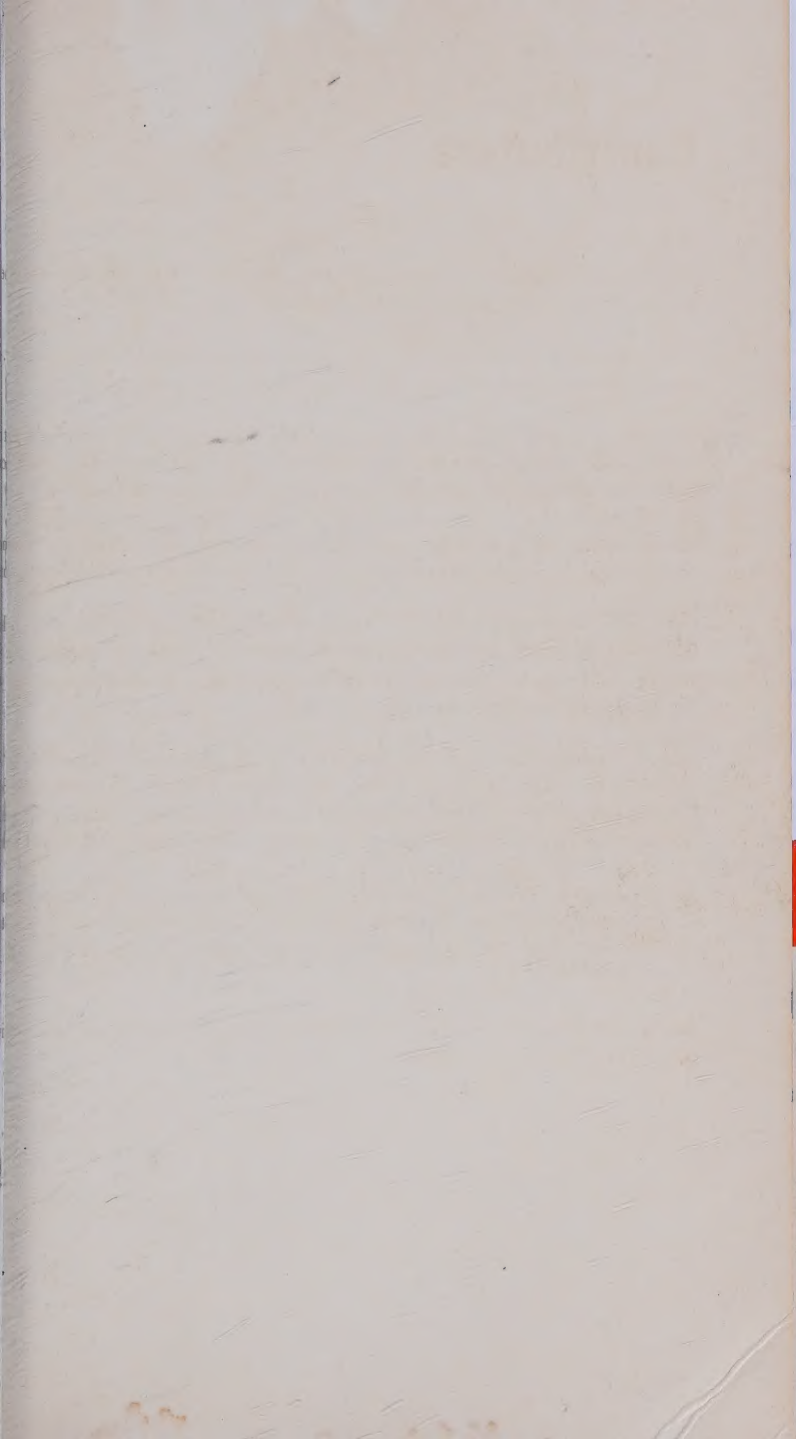
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